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THE
ORPHAN
OF
CHINA,
A
TRAGEDY,
As it is perform'd at the
THEATRE-ROYAL,
IN
DRURY-LANE.

*Nuncia fama ruit, matrisque allabitur aures;
Evolat infelix et fœmineo ululatu
Scissa comam, muros amens atque agmina cursu
Prima petit: non illa virum, non illa Pericli
Telorumque memor: cælum dehinc questibus implet.*

VIRG.

LONDON:

Printed for P. VAILLANT, opposite Southampton-street,
in the Strand. MDCCLIX.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
JOHN, Earl of BUTE,
GROOM of the STOLE
TO HIS
Royal Highness the Prince of WALES.

MY LORD,

THE generous concern you were pleased to express for the anxieties of a young Author, then wholly unknown to your Lordship, and trembling for his first attempt towards “ the gravest, moralest, and most

“ profitable of all poems,” as Milton calls a Tragedy, was the distinguishing mark of a mind truly great, and endued with those fine feelings which are the ornaments of even greatness itself. To this your innate partiality for every endeavour in the polite arts I must ascribe it, that the following scenes met with an early approbation from your Lordship ; an approbation that was at once the author’s pride, and his strongest assurance of success.

The Public have indeed very far outgone my most sanguine hopes, in their reception of this piece : but now, my Lord, *The Orphan* has another severe trial to go through ; he must adventure into the world, unassisted by the advantages of representation : he must enter your Lordship’s closet, and there stand the examination of the most accurate criticism. *In Meti descendat judicis aures.* This cannot but be an alarming circumstance to a writer fully conscious of his own inability ; who has not been able entirely to please even his own taste ; who despairs of satisfying others of a more exalted relish

UNIVERSITY
D E D I C A T I O N. v

relish in the arts, and therefore craves at your Lordship's hands that protection to his industry, which he is aware cannot be granted to his merit,

I have the honour to remain, with the truest respect, and most grateful acknowledgement,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obliged,

and most devoted

humble servant,

Lincoln's Inn,
April 30, 1759.

ARTHUR MURPHY.

PROLOGUE.

By WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, Esq;
POET-LAUREAT.

Spoken by Mr. HOLLAND.

ENOUGH of Greece and Rome. *Th' exhausted store*
Of either nation now can charm no more :
Ev'n adventitious helps in vain we try,
Our triumphs languish in the public eye ;
And grave processions, musically slow,
Here pass unheeded,—as a Lord Mayor's shew.

On eagle wings the poet of to-night
Soars for fresh virtues to the source of light,
To China's eastern realms : and boldly bears
Confucius' morals to Britannia's ears.
Accept th' imported boon ; as echoing Greece
Receiv'd from wand'ring chiefs her golden fleece ;
Nor only richer by the spoils become,
But praise th' advent'rous youth, who brings them home.

One dubious character, we own, he draws,
A patriot zealous in a monarch's cause !
Nice is the task the varying hand to guide,
And teach the blending colours to divide ;
Where, rainbow-like, th' encroaching tints invade
Each other's bounds, and mingle light with shade.

If then, assiduous to obtain his end,
You find too far the subject's zeal extend ;
If undistinguish'd loyalty prevails
Where nature shrinks, and strong affection fails,
On China's tenets charge the fond mistake,
And spare his error for his Virtue's sake.

From nobler motives our allegiance springs,
For Britain knows no Right Divine in Kings ;
From freedom's choice that boasted right arose,
And thro' each line from freedom's choice it flows.
Justice, with Mercy join'd, the throne maintains ;
And in his People's HEARTS OUR MONARCH reigns.

EPI-

E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by Mrs. YATES.

TH R O' five long acts I've wore my figging face,
Confin'd by critic laws to time and place;
Yet that once done, I ramble as I please,
Cry London Hoy! and whisk o'er land and seas —
— Ladies, excuse my dress — 'tis true Chinese.
Thus, quit of husband, death, and tragic strait,
Let us enjoy our dear small talk again.

How cou'd this hard successful hope to prove?
So many heroes, — and not one in love!
No suitor here to talk of flames that thrill;
To say the civil thing — "Your eyes so kill!" —
No ravisher, to force us — to our will!
You've seen their eastern virtues, patriot passions,
And now for something of their taste and fashions.
O Lord! that's charming — cries my Lady Fidget.
I long to know it — Do the creatures wist?
Dear Mrs. Yates, do, tell us — Well, how is it?

First, as to beauty — Set your hearts at rest —
They're all broad foreheads, and pigs eyes at best.
And then they lead such strange, such formal lives! —
— A little more at home than English wives:
Lest the poor things shou'd roam, and prove untrue,
They all are crippled in the tiny shoe.
A hopeful scheme to keep a wife from madding!
— We pinch our feet, and yet are ever gadding.
Then they've no cards, no routs, ne'er take their fling,
And pin-money is an unheard-of thing!
Then how d'ye think they write? — You'll ne'er divine —
From top to bottom down in one strait line.

[Mimicks.]

We ladies, when our flames we cannot smother,
Write letters — from one corner to another.

[Mimicks.]

One mode there is, in which both climes agree;
I scarce can tell — 'Mongst friends then let it be —
— The creatures love to cheat as well as we.

But bless my wits! I've quite forgot the bard —
A civil soul! — By me he sends this card —
"Presents respects — to ev'ry lady here —
"Hopes for the honor — of a single tear."
The critics then will throw their dirt in vain,
One drop from you will wash out ev'ry stain.
Acquaints you — (now the man is past his fright)
He holds his rout, — and here he keeps his night.
Assures you all a welcome kind and hearty,
The ladies shall play crowns — and there's the shilling party.

[Points to the upper gallery.]

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Jaume

Dramatis Personæ.

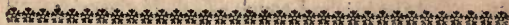
TIMURKAN, Emperor of the Tartars,	} Mr. HAVARD.
OCTAR, a Tartar General,	Mr. BRANSBY.
ZAMTI, a Mandarin,	Mr. GARRICK.
ETAN, educated as his Son,	Mr. MOSSOP.
HAMET, a youthful Cap- tive,	} Mr. HOLLAND.
MORAT, a faithful friend of Zamti,	} Mr. BURTON.
MIRVAN, a Chinese in the Tartar's service, se- cretly a friend of Zamti,	} Mr. DAVIES.
ORASMING, } Two con-	Mr. PACKER.
ZIMVENTI, } spirators, }	Mr. AUSTIN.
MANDANE, Zamti's wife,	Mrs. YATES.

Messenger, Guards, &c.

SCENE, PEKIN, Capital of CHINA.




THE
ORPHAN of CHINA.



A C T I.

Enter MANDANE *and* MIRVAN.

MANDANE.

 O, never; Mirvan, never—still this
heart
Must throb with ceaseless woe —
All-gracious heav'n!
Will not this palace drench'd in
gore; the crown
Of China's kings fix'd on the Tartar's brow;
Will not a tract of twenty years in bondage!
Ah! will not these suffice, without fresh cause
Of bitter anguish in Mandane's breast? —

MIRVAN.

Better suppress these unavailing tears,
This fruitless flood of grief. —

B

MANDANE.

MANDANE.

It will not be —
 Ev'n mid't the horrors of this dismal hour,
 When fate has all transferr'd from lost Cathai
 To vile barbarian hands ; — in such an hour
 This heart, revolting from the public cause,
 Bleeds from a private source ; bleeds for the woes
 That hang o'er Zamti's house —

MIRVAN.

Alas ! Mandane,
 Amidst the gen'ral wreck, who does not feel
 The keen domestic pang ?

MANDANE.

Yes, all. — We all
 Must feel the kindred-touch ; — daily the cries
 Of widows, orphans, father, son, and brother
 In vain are sent to heav'n ; — the wasteful rage
 Of these barbarians, — these accurs'd invaders, —
 Burns with increasing fire ; — the thunder still
 Rolls o'er our heads, threatening with hideous crash
 To fall at once, and bury us in ruin.

MIRVAN.

And quickly fall it must ! — The hand of heav'n
 Weighs this great empire down. —

MANDANE.

Nay, tax not heav'n !
 Almighty justice never bares it's arm
 'Gainst innocence and truth. — 'Tis Timurkan,
 That fell barbarian — that insatiate waster —
 May curses blast the Tartar ! — he — 'tis he
 Has bore down all, and still his slaught'ring sword
 In yonder field of death, where Corea's troops
 Made their last stand for liberty and China,
 Crimsons the land with blood. — This battle lost,
 Oh ! then farewell to all. — But, Mirvan, say,
 How came the tidings ? —

MIRVAN.

MIRVAN.

From yon lofty tow'r,
As my eyes, straining tow'rd the distant plain,
Sent forth an anxious look, thro' clouds of dust
The savage bands appear'd; the western sun
Gleam'd on their burnish'd helms; — and soon a
shout

From the glad multitude proclaim'd th'approach
Of Timurkan; elated with new conquest,
The tyrant comes, and where his wrath will stop
Heav'n only knows. —

MANDANE.

Oh! there — there lies the thought
At which imagination starts, appall'd
With horror at the scene her busy workings
Have colour'd to my sight — there lies the thought
That wakens all a mother's fears — alas!
I tremble for my son —

MIRVAN. —

Your son! — kind heav'n!
Have you not check'd his ardour? — with your tears,
Your soft authority, restrain'd the hero
From the alarms of war? —

MANDANE.

Alas, good Mirvan,
Thou little know'st his danger — but that truth
Must never pass these lips. —

MIRVAN.

I hope Mandane
Doubts not my honest zeal — full well you know
I bear this tyrant deep and mortal hate;
That under him I lift, and wear this garb
In hopes that some occasion may arrive,
When I may strike an unexpected blow,
And do my country right.

MANDANE.

Thy loyalty,
 Thy truth, and honour have been ever spotless.
 Besides thy wrongs, thy countless wrongs, the wounds
 He gave your injur'd family and name, —

MIRVAN.

Alas ! those wounds must still lie bleeding here,
 Untented by the hand of time——Not all
 His lenient arts, his favours heap'd upon me,
 Shall cool the burning anguish of my soul.
 What he, that slew my father ! dragg'd my sister,
 Blooming in years, to his detested bed !
 Yes, tyrant, yes ; —thy unextinguish'd foe
 Dwells in this bosom.—Surely then to me
 Mandane may reveal her griefs—her wrongs
 Will add new fuel to my hidden fires,
 And make them burn more fiercely.——

MANDANE.

Urge no more——
 My woes must rest conceal'd—yet should the tyrant
 Learn from the captives of yon vanquish'd host,
 That China's Orphan breathes the vital air,
 And to himself unknown within his breast
 Unconscious bears the gen'rous glowing flame
 Of all the virtues of his royal line ;
 Oh ! should they know that the dear youth survives,
 That for his righteous cause this war began,
 Their fury then would kindle to a blaze,
 Might wrap the world in flames, and in the ruin
 My blameless son might perish.

MIRVAN.

Seek not thus
 To multiply the ills that hover round you ;
 Nor from the stores of busy fancy add
 New shafts to fortune's quiver.—Zamti's care
 Hath still deceiv'd suspicion's wakeful eye ;

And

And o'er the mandarine his manners pure,
 And sacred function have diffus'd an air
 Of venerable awe, which e'en can teach
 These northern foes to soften into men.

MANDANE.

Yes, Mirvan, yes—Religion wears a mien
 In Zamti's person so severely mild,
 That the fierce Scythian rests upon his spear,
 And wonders what he feels.—Such is the charm
 Of heart-felt virtue; such is nature's force
 That speaks abroad, and in rude northern hearts
 Can stamp the image of an awful God.
 From that source springs some hope:—Wretch that
 I am!

Hope idly flutters on my trembling tongue,
 While melancholy brooding o'er her wrongs,
 Lays waste the mind with horror and despair.
 —What noise is that? —

MIRVAN.

Compose this storm of grief;
 In ev'ry sound your fancy hears the Tartar —
 Your husband this way bends —

MANDANE.

Celestial pow'rs!
 What lab'ring sighs heave in his breast? — what
 terror
 Rolls in the patriot's eye? — haste, Mirvan, hence;
 Again look out; gather the flying news,
 And let me know each circumstance of ruin.
 [Exit Mirvan.]

Enter ZAMTI.

MANDANE.

Zamti!

ZAMTI.

Mandane! —

MANDANE.

Ah! what hast thou seen?
 What hast thou heard?—tell me,—has fate decreed
 The doom of China!

ZAMTI.

China is no more; ———
 The eastern world is lost—this mighty empire
 Falls with the universe beneath the stroke
 Of savage force—falls from its tow'ring hopes;
 For ever, ever fall'n!

MANDANE.

Yet why, ye pow'rs!
 Why should a tyrant, train'd to lust and murder,
 A lawless ravager from savage wilds,
 Where chearful day ne'er dawns, but low'ring heav'n
 For ever rolls a turbulence of clouds;
 Why should a monster thus usurp the world,
 And trample fair simplicity from ill
 Beneath his ruffian feet? ———

ZAMTI.

Far hence, Mandane,
 Those happy days, alas! are fled, when peace
 Here nurs'd her blooming olives, and shed round
 Her soft'ring influence.——In vain the plan
 Of sacred laws, by hoary elders taught,
 Laws founded on the base of public weal,
 Gave lessons to the world.——In vain Confucius
 Unlock'd his radiant stores of moral truth;
 In vain bright science, and each tender muse,
 Beam'd ev'ry elegance on polish'd life——
 Barbarian pow'r prevails.——Whate'er our sages
 taught,
 Or genius could inspire, must fade away,
 And each fair virtue wither at the blast
 Of northern domination.

MAN-

MANDANE.

Fatal day !

More fatal e'en than that, which first beheld
This race accurs'd within these palace walls,
Since hope, that balm of wretched minds, is now
Irrevocably lost.——

ZAMTI.

Name not the day

Which saw this city sack'd—fresh stream my eyes,
Fresh bleeds my heart, whene'er the sad idea
Comes o'er my tortur'd mind. — Why, cruel pow'rs!
Why in that moment could not Zamti fall ?

MANDANE.

Thy sanctity, the symbol of thy God,
Made ev'n the conqueror suspend his blow,
And murmur soft humanity.—— High heav'n
Protected thee for its own great designs ;
To save the royal child, the new-born babe,
From the dire slaughter of his ancient line.

ZAMTI.

Yes, my Mandane, in that hour of carnage,
For purposes yet in the womb of time,
I was reserv'd.——I was ordain'd to save
The infant boy ; the dear, the precious charge,
The last of all my kings ;— full twenty years
I've hid him from the world and from himself,
And now I swear——Kneel we together here,
While in this dreadful pause our souls renew
Their solemn purpose.——

Both kneel.

Thou all-gracious Being,
Whose tutelary care hath watch'd the fate
Of China's Orphan, who hast taught his steps
The paths of safety, still envelop him
In sev'nfold night, till your own hour is come ;
Till your slow justice see the dread occasion
To rouse his soul, and bid him walk abroad

8 The ORPHAN of CHINA.

Vicegerent of your pow'r;—and if thy servant,
Or this his soft associate, ere defeat
By any word or deed the great design,
Then strait may all your horrible displeasure
Be launch'd upon us from your red right arm,
And in one ruin dash us both together,
The blasted monuments of wrath:——

MANDANE.

That here
Mandane vows ne'er to betray his cause,
Be it enroll'd in the records of heav'n! *Both rise.*

ZAMTI.

And now my heart more lightly beats; methinks
With strength redoubled I can meet the shock
Of adverse fate.

MANDANE.

And lo! the trial comes——
For see where Etan mourns—See where the youth,
Unknowing of the storm that gathers o'er him,
Brings some new tale of woe.——

Enter ETAN.

ETAN.

My honour'd father,
And you, my helpless mother,—ah! where now,
Illustrious wretched pair, where will ye fly?
Where will your miseries now find a shelter?

ZAMTI.

In virtue——I and this dear faithful woman,
We ask no more.——

MANDANE.

Ah! quickly, Etan, say
What means that pallid look?—what new event
Brings on the work of fate?——

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Say, does the tyrant
Return unglutted yet with blood?——

ETAN.

He does;
Ev'n now his triumph moves within the gates
In dread barbaric pomp:—the iron swarms
Of Hyperboreans troop along the streets,
Reeking from slaughter; while, from gazing crowds
Of their dire countrymen, an uproar wild
Of joy ferocious thro' th' astonish'd air
Howls like a northern tempest:—O'er the rest,
Proud in superior eminence of guilt,
The tyrant rides sublime.—Behind his car
The refuse of the sword, a captive train
Display their honest scars, and gnash their teeth
With rage and desperation.——

MANDANE.

Cruel fate!

ETAN.

With these a youth, distinguish'd from the rest,
Proceeds in fullen march.—Heroic fire
Glow in his cheek, and from his flashing eye
Beams amiable horror.——

MANDANE.

What of this youth?——

ZAMTI.

Be not alarm'd, Mandane—What of him?

ETAN.

On him all eyes were fix'd with eager gaze,
As if their spirits, struggling to come forth,
Would strain each visual nerve,—while thro' the
crowd

A busy murmur ran — “ If fame say right,
“ Beneath that habit lurks a prince; the last

Of

10 The ORPHAN of CHINA.

“ Of China’s race.”—The rumour spreads abroad
From man to man; and all with loud acclaim
Denounce their vengeance on him.——

MANDANE.

Ha! what say’st thou, Etan?
Heav’ns how each black’ning hour in deeper horror
Comes charg’d with woe!

ZAMTI.

It cannot be.—Ye vain,
Ye groundless terrors hence.——

Afide.

MANDANE.

My honour’d lord,
Those eyes upturn’d to heav’n, alas! in vain,
Declare your inward conflict.——

ZAMTI.

Lov’d Mandane,
I prithee leave me—but a moment leave me.—
Heed not the workings of a sickly fancy,
Wrought on by ev’ry popular report.
Thou know’st with Morat I convey’d the infant
Far as the eastern point of Corea’s realm;
There where no human trace is seen, no sound
Assails the ear, save when the foaming surge
Breaks on the shelving beach, that there the youth
Might mock their busy search.—Then check thy
fears——

Retire, my love, awhile; I’ll come anon,—
And fortify thy soul with firm resolve,
Becoming Zamti’s wife.——

MANDANE.

Yes, Zamti’s wife
Shall never act unworthy of her lord.
Then hence I’ll go, and satisfy each doubt
This youthful captive raises in my heart,

Quick

Quick panting with its fears.—And O ye pow'rs!
Protect my son, my husband, and my king!
[Exit Mandane.]

ZAMTI and ETAN.

ZAMTI.

Come hither, Etan — thou perceiv'st the toils
That now incircle me —

ETAN.

Alas! too well
I see th'impending storm.—But surely, sir,
Should this young captive prove the royal Orphan,
You'll never own th'important truth. —

ZAMTI.

Dream not, young man,
To stand secure, yet blooming into life,
While vengeance hovers o'er your father's head.
The stock once fall'n, each scyon must decay.

ETAN.

Then let me perish; — witness for me, heav'n,
Could Etan's fall appease the tyrant's wrath,
A willing victim he would yield his life,
And ask no greater boon of heav'n.

ZAMTI.

This zeal
So fervid in a stranger's cause —

ETAN.

A stranger! he!
My king a stranger! — Sir, you never meant it —
Perhaps you would explore the fiery seeds
Of Etan's temper, ever prompt to blaze
At honour's sacred name. — Perish the man,
Who, when his country calls him to defend
The rights of human kind, or bravely die,

Who

Who then to glory dead can shrink aghast,
And hold a council with his abject fears.

ZAMTI.

These tow'rings of the soul, alas! are vain.
I know the Tartar well — should I attempt
By any virtuous fraud to veil the truth,
His lion-rage again shall stalk abroad,
Again shall quaff the blood of innocence;
And for Zaphimri all the poor remains
Of China's matrons and her hoary fires,
Her blooming virgins, and her lisping babes,
Shall yield their throats to the fell murd'rer's knife,
And all be lost for ever —

ETAN.

Then at once
Proclaim him to the world; each honest hand
Will grasp a sword, and, 'midst the circling guards,
Reach the usurper's heart — or should they fail,
Should overwhelming bands obstruct the deed,
They'll greatly dare to die! — better to die
With falling liberty, than basely lead
An ignominious life. — Zaphimri lost,
Ne'er shall fair order dawn, but thro' the land
Slav'ry shall clank her chains, and violation,
Rapine, and murder riot at the will
Of lust and lawless pow'r.

ZAMTI.

Thou brave young man,
Indulge my fond embrace — thy lovely ardor
It glads me thus to see. — To ease at once
Thy gen'rous fears, — the prince Zaphimri's safe;
Safe in my guardian care —

ETAN.

This pris'ner, sir,
He does not then alarm you? —

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

No! from thence
I've nought to fear.——

ETAN.

Oh! sir, inform your son
Where is the royal youth?

ZAMTI.

Seek not too soon
To know that truth — now I'll disclose the work,
The work of vengeance, which my lab'ring soul
Has long been fashioning.—Ev'n at this hour
Stupendous ruin hovers o'er the heads
Of this accursed race——

ETAN.

Ruin!

ZAMTI.

I'll tell thee——
When Timurkan led forth his savage bands,
Unpeopling this great city, I then seiz'd
The hour, to tamper with a chosen few,
Who have resolv'd, when the barbarians lie
Buried in sleep and wine, and hotly dream
Their havock o'er again, — then, then, my son,
In one collected blow to burst upon 'em;
Like their own northern clouds, whose midnight
horror
Impending o'er the world, at length breaks forth
In the vaunt lightning's blaze, in storms and thunder
Thro' all the red'ning air, till frightened nature
Start from her couch, and waken to a scene
Of uproar and destruction. ——

ETAN.

Oh! my Father,
The glorious enterprize!

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Mark me, young man.—
 Seek thou my friends, Orafming and Zimventi.
 In the dim holy cloisters of yon temple
 Thou'lt find them musing—near Osmingti's tomb
 I charge they all convene; and there do thou
 Await my coming. — Bid them ne'er remit
 Their high heroic ardor; — let them know,
 Whate'er shall fall on this old mould'ring clay,
 The tyrant never shall subdue my mind.

End of the First Act.





A C T II.

Enter ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

REAM on, deluded tyrant; yes, dream on
D In blind security:—whene'er high heav'n
 Means to destroy, it curses with illusion,
 With error of the mind.—Yes, wreak
 thy fury

Upon this captive youth;—whoe'er he is,
 If from his death this groaning empire rise,
 Once more itself, resplendent, rich in arts
 That humanize the world,—he pays a debt
 Due to his King, his Country, and his God.
 His father,—wheresoe'er he dwell,—in tears
 Shall tell the glory on his boy deriv'd;
 And ev'n his mother, 'midst her matron shrieks,
 Shall bless the childbed pang that brought him forth
 To this great lot, by fate to few allow'd! —
 What would'st thou, Mirvan? —

Enter MIRVAN.

MIRVAN.

Eagerly without,
 A rev'rend stranger craves access to Zamti—
 His head hoary with age, with galling tears
 His eyes suffus'd; his ev'ry look impatience—

ZAMTI.

Give him admittance —
 —How my spirits rush

[*Exit Mirvan.*

Tumultuous

Tumultuous to my heart—what may this mean?
Lo! where he comes——

Enter MORAT.

MORAT.

Zamti!——

ZAMTI.

Ha!—thro' the veil
Of age,—that face—that mien—Morat!

MORAT.

Oh! Zamti,
Let me once more embrace thee——

ZAMTI.

Good old man! *They embrace.*
But wherefore art thou here?—what of my boy?

MORAT.

Ah! what indeed?—Ev'n from the ocean's margin,
Parch'd with the fun, or chill'd with midnight damps,
O'er hills, and rocks, and dreary continents,
In vain I've follow'd——

ZAMTI.

Why didst let him forth?

MORAT.

Think not thy Morat urg'd him to the deed.
His valour was the cause; and soon as fame
Proclaim'd the prince alive, the mighty din
Of preparation through all Corea's realm
Alarm'd his breast—Indignant of controul
He burst his covert, and now, hapless youth——

ZAMTI.

Ah!—dead!—in battle fall'n!——

MORAT.

MORAT.

Alas! ev'n now
He drags the conqu'ror's chain.——

ZAMTI.

Mandane then
May still embrace her son.——My boy may live,
To know the sweets of freedom, e'er he die.

MORAT.

Alas! the measure of your woes is full.
Unconscious of our frauds, the tyrant thinks
The prince his pris'ner in your son.——

ZAMTI.

Ah! ——Morat!

MORAT.

Wild thro' the streets the foe calls out on Zamti.
Thee they pronounce the author of this fraud;
And on your Hamet threaten instant vengeance.

ZAMTI.

There was but this — but this, ye cruel pow'rs,
And this you've heap'd upon me.—Was it not
Enough to tear him from his mother's arms,
Doom'd for his prince to wander o'er the world?
—Alas! what needed more? — Fond foolish eyes,
Stop your unbidden'gush—tear, tear me piecemeal—
—No, I will not complain—but whence on him
Could that suspicion glance? ——

MORAT.

This very morn,
E'er yet the battle join'd, a faithful messenger,
Who thro' the friendly gloom of night had held
His darkling way, and pass'd the Tartar's camp,
Brought me advices from the Corean chief,—
That soon as Hamet join'd the warlike train,
His story he related.——Strait the gallant leader

C

With

With open arms receiv'd him—knew him for thy
son,

In secret knew him, nor reveal'd he aught
That touch'd his birth.—But still the busy voice
Of fame, encreasing as she goes, through all the
ranks

Babbled abroad each circumstance.—By thee
How he was privately convey'd—Sent forth
A tender infant to be rear'd in solitude,
A stranger to himself!—The warriors saw
With what a graceful port he mov'd in arms,
An early hero!—deem'd him far above
The common lot of life—deem'd him Zaphimri,
And all with reverential awe beheld him.
This, this, my Zamti, reach'd the tyrant's ear,
And rises into horrid proof.—

ZAMTI.

If so,

Oh! what a sacrifice must now be made! *Aside.*

MORAT.

But when the secret shall be known——

ZAMTI.

Oh! Morat!

Does thy poor bleeding country still remain
Dear to thy heart?—Say, dost thou still revere
That holy pow'r above, Supreme of Beings,
Mistaken by the Bonzée, whom our fathers
Worshipp'd in happier days!——

MORAT.

He,—only he

For twenty years hath giv'n me strength in exile.

ZAMTI.

Then bending here, before his awful throne,
Swear what I now unfold, shall ever lie
In sacred silence wrapp'd.—

MORAT.

MORAT.

I swear! —

ZAMTI.

Now mark me —

Morat — my son — (*turning aside.*) Oh! cruel, cruel task,

To conquer nature while the heart-strings break. —

MORAT.

Why heave those sighs? — and why that burst of grief?

ZAMTI.

My son — his guiltless blood — I cannot speak —
Bursts into tears.

MORAT.

Ha! — Wilt thou shed his blood? —

ZAMTI.

Thou wretched father! — *Half aside.*

MORAT.

Oh! had you known the virtues of the youth;
His truth, his courage, his enlighten'd mind —

ZAMTI.

I prithee urge no more — here nature's voice
Speaks in such pleadings: — Such reproaches, Morat,
— Here in my very heart — gives woundings here,
Thou can'st not know — and only parents feel —

MORAT.

And wilt thou, cruel in thy tears —

ZAMTI.

Nay cease,

In pity to a father cease — Think, Morat,
Think of Zaphimri —

MORAT.

Ah! how fares the prince?

ZAMTI.

He fares, my Morat, like a God on earth,
 Unknowing his celestial origin :
 Yet quick, intense, and bursting into action ;
 His great heart labr'ing with he knows not what
 Prodigious deeds !——Deeds, which e'er long shall
 rouze,
 Astonish, and alarm the world.——

MORAT.

What mean
 Those mystic sounds ?

ZAMTI.

Revenge, conquest, and freedom !——

MORAT.

Conquest and freedom !

ZAMTI.

Ay !——Conquest and freedom !
 The midnight hour shall call a chosen band
 Of hidden patriots forth ; who, when the foe
 Sinks down in drunken revelry, shall pour
 The gather'd rage of twenty years upon him,
 And vindicate the eastern world.——

MORAT.

Oh ! Zamti,
 The news revives my soul.——

ZAMTI.

And can'st thou think
 To save one vulgar life, that Zamti now
 Will marr the vast design ?——No ;——let him bleed,
 Let my boy bleed :——In such a cause as this
 I can resign my son——with tears of joy
 Resign him,——and one complicated pang
 Shall wrench him from my heart.——
 The conqu'ror comes ! *Warlike music within.*

This

This is no hour for parlying——Morat, hence,
And leave me to my fix'd resolve.——

MORAT.

Yet think,
Think of some means to save your Hamet.——

ZAMTI.

Oh!

It cannot be——the soul of Timurkan
Is bold and stirring — when occasion calls,
He springs aloft, like an expanding fire,
And marks his way with ruin.—— Now he knows
Zaphimri lives, his fear will make him daring
Beyond his former crimes —— for joy and riot
Which this day's triumph brings, remorseless rage
And massacre succeed —— and all our hopes
Are blasted, for an unimportant boy.

A second flourish.

MORAT.

That nearer sound proclaims his dread approach —
Yet once more, Zamti, think ——

ZAMTI.

No more—I'll send
Those shall conduct thee where Orasming lives —
There dwell, unseen of all.—But, Morat, first
Seek my Mandane. — Heav'ns! — how shall I bear
Her strong impetuosity of grief,
When she shall know my fatal purpose? — Thou
Prepare her tender spirit; sooth her mind,
And save, oh! save me from that dreadful conflict.

[Exeunt.]

Two large Folding-gates in the Back-scene are burst open by the Tartars, and then enter TIMURKAN, with his Train.

TIMURKAN.

Hail to this regal dome, this glitt'ring palace!
Where this inventive race have lavish'd all
Their elegance; — ye gay apartments, hail!
Beneath your storied roof, where mimic life
Glow's the eye, and at the painter's touch
A new creation lives along the walls;
Once more receive a conqueror, arriv'd
From rougher scenes, where stern rebellion dar'd
Draw forth his phalanx; till this warlike arm
Hurl'd desolation on his falling ranks,
And now the monster, in yon field of death,
Lies overwhelm'd in ruin. —

OCTAR.

There he fell,
No more to stalk thy realm; the eastern world
From this auspicious day, beneath your feet
Lies bound in adamant chains. —

TIMURKAN.

Thus Octar,
Shall Timurkan display his conqu'ring banners,
From high Samarcand's walls, to where the Tanais
Devolves his icy tribute to the sea. —

OCTAR.

But first this captive prince. —

TIMURKAN.

Yes, Octar, first
Zaphimri gluts my rage — bring him before us — first
We'll crush the seeds of dark conspiracy —
For Zamti — he, that false insidious slave,
Shall dearly pay his treasons. —

I

OCTAR.

OCTAR.

Zamti's crimes

'Twere best to leave unpunish'd : — vers'd in wiles
Of fly hypocrisy, he wins the love
Of the deluded multitude. — 'Twould seem,
Should we inflict that death his frauds deserve,
As if we meant destruction to their faith :
When a whole people's minds are once inflam'd
For their religious rights, their fury burns
With rage more dreadful, as the source is holy. —

TIMURKAN.

Octar, thou reason'st right : — henceforth my art
To make this stubborn race receive my yoke,
Shall be by yielding to their softer manners,
Their vesture, laws, and customs: thus to blend
And make the whole one undistinguish'd people.
The boy comes forth in sullen mood — what passions
Swell in his breast in vain ! —

Enter HAMET in chains.

TIMURKAN.

Thou art the youth,
Who mow'd our battle down, and flesh'd your sword
In many a slaughter'd Tartar. —

HAMET.

True; — I am. —

TIMURKAN.

Too well I mark'd thy rage, and saw thee hew
A wasteful passage thro' th'embattled plain.

HAMET.

Then be thou witness for me, in that hour
I never shunn'd your thickest war ; — and if
In yonder field, where my poor countrymen
In mangled heaps lie many a rood extended,
Kind fate had doom'd me to a noble fall,
With this right arm I earn'd it. —

TIMURKAN.

Say, what motive
 Unsheathe'd thy rebel blade, and bad thee seek
 These wars? —

H A M E T.

The love of honourable deeds;
 The groans of bleeding China, and the hate
 Of tyrants.

TIMURKAN.

Ha! — take heed, rash youth — I see
 This lesson has been taught thee. — Ostar, haste,
 Seek me the mandarine — let him forthwith
 Attend me here. (*Exit Ostar.*) — Now tremble at
 my words!

Thy motive to these wars is known — thou art
 Zaphimri. —

H A M E T.

I Zaphimri!

TIMURKAN.

False one, yes;
 Thou art Zaphimri — thou! — whom treach'rous
 guile
 Stole from my rage, and sent to distant wilds,
 Till years and horrid counsel should mature thee
 For war and wild commotion. —

H A M E T.

I the prince!

The last of China's race! nay mock not majesty,
 Nor with the borrow'd robes of sacred kings
 Dress up a wretch like me — were I Zaphimri,
 Think'st thou thy trembling eye could bear the shock
 Of a much injur'd king? — could'st thou sustain it?
 Say, could'st thou bear to view a royal orphan,
 Whose father, mother, brothers, sisters, all,
 Thy murd'rous arm hath long since laid in dust?
 Whose native crown on thy ignoble brow
 Thoudar'st dishonour? — whose wide wasted country
 Thy arms have made a wilderness? —

TIMUR-

TIMURKAN.

I see

Thou hast been tutor'd in thy lone retreat
By some sententious pedant. — Soon these vain,
These turgid maxims shall be all subdued
By thy approaching death. —

H A M E T.

Let death come on ;
Guilt, guilt alone shrinks back appall'd — the brave
And honest still defy his dart ; the wise
Calmly can eye his frown ; — and misery
Invokes his friendly aid to end her woes. —

TIMURKAN.

Thy woes, presumptuous youth, with all my fears,
Shall soon lie buried. —

Enter ZAMTI.

TIMURKAN.

Now, pious false one, say, who is that youth ?

Z A M T I.

His air, his features, and his honest mien
Proclaim all fair within. — But, mighty sir,
I know him not. —

TIMURKAN.

Take heed, old man, nor dare,
As thou do'st dread my pow'r, to practice guile
Beneath a mask of sacerdotal perfidy :
Priestcraft, I think, calls it a pious fraud.

Z A M T I.

Priestcraft and sacerdotal perfidy
To me are yet unknown. — Religion's garb
Here never serves to consecrate a crime ;
We have not yet, thank heav'n, so far imbib'd
The vices of the north. —

TIMUR-

TIMURKAN.

Thou vile impostor!

Avow Zaphimri, whom thy treach'rous arts
 Conceal'd from justice ; or else desolation
 Again shall ravage this devoted land.

ZAMTI,

Alas ! full well thou know'st, that arm already
 Hath shed all royal blood. —

TIMURKAN.

Traitor, 'tis false ; —

By thee, vile slave, I have been wrought to think
 The hated race destroy'd — thy artful tale
 Abus'd my cred'lous ear. — But know, at length
 Some captive slaves, by my command impal'd,
 Have own'd the horrid truth ; — have own'd they
 fought

To seat Zaphimri on the throne of China.
 Hear me, thou froward boy ; — dar'st thou be honest,
 And answer who thou art ? —

HAMET.

Dare I be honest ? —

I dare ; — a mind grown up in native honour
 Dares not be otherwise — then if thy troops
 Ask from the lightning of whose blade they fled,
 Tell 'em 'twas Hamet's. —

ZAMTI.

'Tis — it is my son —

My boy, — my Hamet —

Aside.

TIMURKAN.

Where was your abode ? —

HAMET.

Far hence remote, in Corea's happy realm —
 Where the first beams of day with orient blushes
 Tinge the salt wave — there on the sea-beat shore

A ca-

A cavern'd rock yielded a lone retreat
To virtuous Morat. —

ZAMTI.

Oh ! ill-fated youth !

Aside.

HAMET.

The pious hermit in that moss-grown dwelling
Found an asylum from heart-piercing woes,
From slav'ry, and that restless din of arms
With which thy fell ambition shook the world.
There too the sage nurtur'd my greener years ;
With him and contemplation have I walk'd
The paths of wisdom ; what the great Confucius
Of moral beauty taught, — whate'er the wise,
Still wooing knowlege in her secret haunts,
Disclos'd of nature to the sons of men,
My wond'ring mind has heard — but above all
The hermit taught me the most useful science,
That noble science, to be Brave and Good. —

ZAMTI.

Oh ! lovely youth — at ev'ry word he utters,
A soft effusion mix'd of grief and joy
Flows o'er my heart.

Aside.

TIMURKAN.

Who, said he, was your father ?

HAMET

My birth, the pious sage, — I know not why —
Still wrapp'd in silence ; and when urg'd to tell,
He only answer'd that a time might come,
I should not blush to know my father. —

TIMURKAN.

Now,

With truth declare, hast thou ne'er heard of Zamti ?

HAMET.

Of Zamti ? — oft enraptur'd with his name

My

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My heart has glow'd within me, as I heard
The praises of the godlike man. —

TIMURKAN.

Thou slave, *To Zamti.*
Each circumstance arraigns thy guilt. —

HAMET.

Oh! heav'ns!
Can that be Zamti?

TIMURKAN.

Yes, that is the traitor —

HAMET.

Let me adore his venerable form,
Thus on my knees adore —

ZAMTI.

I cannot look upon him,
Left tenderness dissolve my feeble pow'rs,
And wrest my purpose from me — *Aside.*

TIMURKAN.

Hence, vain boy!
Thou specious traitor, thou false hoary moralist!
To Zamti.

Confusion has o'erta'en thy subtle frauds.
To make my crown's assurance firm, that none
Hereafter shall aspire to wrench it from me,
Now own your fancied king; or, by yon heav'n,
To make our vengeance sure, thro' all the east
Each youth shall die, and carnage thin mankind,
Till in the gen'ral wreck your boasted Orphan
Shall undistinguish'd fall. — Thou know'st my
word

Is fate. — Ootar, draw near — when treason lurks
Each moment's big with danger — thou observe
These my commands —

Talks apart to Ootar.

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Now virtuous cruelty repress my tears.

—Cease your soft conflict, nature.—Hear me,
Tartar.—

That youth—his air—his ev'ry look, unmans me
quite.—

TIMURKAN.

Wilt thou begin, dissembler?

ZAMTI.

Down, down, down—

It must be so, or all is lost—That youth,—
I've dealt by him—as ev'ry king could wish
In a like case his faithful subjects would.

TIMURKAN.

Ha!—dost thou own it?—Triumph, Timurkan,
And in Zaphimri's grave lie hush'd my fears.
Brave Octar, let the victim strait be led
To yonder sacred fane; there, in the view
Of my rejoicing Tartars, the declining sun
Shall see him offer'd to our living Lama,
For this day's conquest:—thence a golden train
Of radiant years, shall mark my future sway. [*Exit.*]

ZAMTI.

Flow, flow my tears, and ease this aching breast.

HAMET.

Nay, do not weep for me, thou good old man.
If it will close the wounds of bleeding China,
That a poor wretch like me must yield his life,
I give it freely.—If I am a king,
Tho' sure it cannot be, what greater blessing
Can a young prince enjoy, than to diffuse,
By one great act, that happiness on millions,
For which his life should be a round of care?
Come, lead me to my fate.— [*Exit with Octar, &c.*]

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Hold, hold my heart !

—My gallant, gen'rous youth !—Mandane's air,
His mother's dear resemblance rives my soul.MANDANE *within*.Oh ! let me fly, and find the barb'rous man—
Where—where is Zamti ? ——

ZAMTI.

Ha !—'tis Mandane ——

Wild as the winds, the mother all alive
In ev'ry heartstring, the forlorn one comes
To claim her boy. ——*Enter* MANDANE.

MANDANE.

And can it then be true ?

Is human nature exil'd from thy breast ?

Art thou, indeed, so barb'rous ? ——

ZAMTI.

Lov'd Mandane,

Fix not your scorpions here—a bearded shaft

Already drinks my spirits up. ——

MANDANE.

I've seen

The trusty Morat—Oh ! I've heard it all. ——

He would have shunn'd my steps ; but what can
'scape

The eye of tenderness like mine ? ——

ZAMTI.

By heav'n

I cannot speak to thee. ——

MANDANE.

Think'ft thou those tears,

Those false, those cruel tears, will choak the voice
Of

Of a fond mother's love, now stung to madness?
Oh! I will rend the air with lamentations,
Root up this hair, and beat this throbbing breast,
Turn all connubial joys to bitterness,
To fell despair, to anguish and remorse,
Unless my son——

ZAMTI.

Thou ever faithful woman,
Oh! leave me to my woes. ——

MANDANE.

Give me my child,
Thou worse than Tartar, give me back my son;
Oh! give him to a mother's eager arms,
And let me strain him to my heart. ——

ZAMTI.

Heav'n knows
How dear my boy is here: — But our first duty
Now claims attention —— to our country's love;
All other tender fondnesses must yeild;
— I was a subject e'er I was a father.

MANDANE.

You were a savage bred in Scythian wilds,
And humanizing pity never reach'd
Your heart. —— Was it for this — oh! thou unkind
one,

Was it for this —— oh! thou inhuman father,
You woo'd me to your nuptial bed? — So long
Have I then clasp'd thee in these circling arms,
And made this breast your pillow? — Cruel, say,
Are these your vows? — are these your fond endear-
ments?

Nay, look upon me — if this wasted form,
These faded eyes have turn'd your heart against me,
With grief for you I wither'd in my bloom.

ZAMTI.

Why wilt thou pierce my heart?

MANDANE.

MANDANE.

Alas ! my son,
 Have I then bore thee in these matron arms,
 To see thee bleed ? — Thus dost thou then return ?
 This could your mother hope, when first she sent
 Her infant exile to a distant clime ?

Ah ! could I think thy early love of fame,
 Would urge thee to this peril ? — thus to fall,
 By a stern father's will — by thee to die ! —
 From thee, inhuman, to receive his doom ! —
 — Murder'd by thee ! — Yet hear me, Zamti, hear
 me —

Thus on my knees — I threaten now no more —
 'Tis nature's voice that pleads ; nature alarm'd,
 Quick, trembling, wild, touch'd to her inmost feel-
 ing,
 When force would tear her tender young ones from
 her.

ZAMTI.

Nay, seek not with enfeebling fond ideas
 To swell the flood of grief — it is in vain —
 He must submit to fate. —

MANDANE.

Barbarian ! no — *She rises hastily.*
 He shall not die — rather — I prithee, Zamti,
 Urge not a grief-distracted woman : — Tremble
 At the wild fury of a mother's love.

ZAMTI.

I tremble rather at a breach of oaths.
 But thou break thine. — Bathe your perfidious hands
 In this life blood. — Betray the righteous cause
 Of all our sacred kings.

MANDANE.

Our kings ! — our kings !
 What are the scepter'd rulers of the world ? —
 Form'd of one common clay, are they not all
 Doom'd with each subject, with the meanest slave,

To

To drink the cup of human woe? — alike
 All levell'd by affliction? — Sacred kings!
 'Tis human policy sets up their claim. —
 Mine is a mother's cause — mine is the cause
 Of husband, wife, and child; — those tend'rest ties!
 Superior to your right divine of kings! —

ZAMTI.

Then go, Mandane — thou once faithful woman,
 Dear to this heart in vain; — go, and forget
 Those virtuous lessons, which I oft have taught thee,
 In fond credulity, while on each word
 You hung enamour'd. — Go, to Timurkan
 Reveal the awful truth. — Be thou spectatress
 Of murder'd majesty. — Embrace your son,
 And let him lead in shame and servitude
 A life ignobly bought. — Then let those eyes,
 Those faded eyes, which grief for me hath dimm'd,
 With guilty joy reanimate their lustre,
 To brighten slavery, and beam their fires
 On the fell Scythian murderer.

MANDANE.

And is it thus,
 Thus is Mandane known? — My soul disdains
 The vile imputed guilt. — No — never — never —
 Still am I true to fame. Come lead me hence,
 Where I may lay down life to save Zaphimri,
 — But save my Hamet too. — Then, then you'll find
 A heart beats here, as warm and great as thine.

ZAMTI.

Then make with me one strong, one glorious effort;
 And rank with those, who, from the first of time,
 In fame's eternal archives stand rever'd,
 For conqu'ring all the dearest ties of nature,
 To serve the gen'ral weal. —

MANDANE.

That savage virtue

Loses with me its horrid charms.—I've sworn

To save my king.—But should a mother turn

A dire assassin—oh! I cannot bear

The piercing thought.—Distraction, quick distraction

Will seize my brain.—See there—My child, my child,—

By guards furrounded, a devoted victim.—

Barbarian hold!—Ah! see, he dies! he dies!—

She faints into Zamti's arms.

ZAMTI.

Where is Arface?—Fond maternal love

Shakes her weak frame—(*Enter Arface.*) Quickly, Arface, help

This ever-tender creature.—Wand'ring life

Rekindles in her cheek.—Soft, lead her off

To where the fanning breeze in yonder bow'r,

May woo her spirits back.—Propitious heav'n!

Pity the woundings of a father's heart;

Pity my strugglings with this best of women;

Support our virtue:—kindle in our souls

A ray of your divine enthusiasm;

Such as inflames the patriot's breast, and lifts

Th' impassion'd mind to that sublime of virtue,

That even on the rack it feels the good,

Which in a single hour it works for millions,

And leaves the legacy to after times.

[Exit, leading off Mandane.]


End of the Second Act.



A C T III.

SCENE *A Temple. Several tombs up and down the stage.*

Enter MORAT.


 HIS is the place — these the long
 winding isles,
 The solemn arches, whose religious awe
 Attunes the mind to melancholy musing,
 Such as befits free men reduc'd to slaves. —
 Here Zamti meets his friends — amid these tombs,
 Where lie the sacred manes of our kings,
 They pour their orisons — hold converse here
 With the illustrious shades of murder'd heroes,
 And meditate a great revenge — (*a groan is heard*)
 a groan !

The burst of anguish from some care-worn wretch
 That sorrows o'er his country — ha ! 'tis Zamti !

ZAMTI comes out of a tomb.

ZAMTI.

Who's he, that seeks these mansions of the dead ?

MORAT.

The friend of Zamti and of China. —

ZAMTI.

Morat !

Come to my arms, thou good, thou best of men —
 I have been weeping o'er the sacred reliques

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Of a dear murder'd king——where are our friends?
Hast seen Orasming?

MORAT.

Thro' these vaults of death
Lonely he wanders,——plung'd in deep despair.—

ZAMTI.

Hast thou not told him?—hast thou nought reveal'd
Touching Zaphimri?

MORAT.

There I wait thy will——

ZAMTI.

Oh! thou art ever faithful——on thy lips
Sits pensive silence, with her hallow'd finger
Guarding the pure recesses of thy mind.——
But, lo! they come.——

Enter ORASMING, ZIMVENTI, and others.

ZAMTI.

Droop ye, my gallant friends?

ORASMING.

Oh! Zamti, all is lost——Our dreams of liberty
Are vanish'd into air.——Nought now avails
Integrity of life.——Ev'n heav'n, combin'd
With lawless might, abandons us and virtue——

ZAMTI.

Can your great souls thus shrink within ye? thus
From heroes will ye dwindle into slaves?

ORASMING.

Oh! could you give us back Zaphimri!——then
Danger would smile, and lose its face of horror.

ZAMTI.

What,——would his presence fire ye!

ORASMING.

ORASMING.

'Twould by heav'n!

ZIMVENTI.

This night should free us from the Tartar's yoke.

ZAMTI.

Then mark the care of the all-gracious Gods!

This youthful captive, whom in chains they hold,
Is not Zaphimri. —

ORASMING, ZIMVENTI.

Not Zaphimri!

ZAMTI.

No!

Unconscious of himself, and to the world unknown,
He walks at large among us —

ORASMING.

Heav'nly pow'rs!

ZAMTI.

This night, my friends, this very night to rise
Refulgent from a blow, that frees us all, —
From the usurper's fate! — the first of men,
Deliv'rer of his country!

ORASMING.

Mighty Gods!

Can this be possible? —

ZAMTI.

It is most true —

I'll bring him to ye strait — (*calling to Etan within
the tomb*) what ho! — come forth —

You seem transfix'd with wonder — oh! my friends,
Watch all the motions of your rising spirit,
Direct your ardor, when anon ye hear
What fate, long pregnant with the vast event,
Is lab'ring into birth. —

ETAN comes out of the tomb.

ETAN.

Each step I move
A deeper horror sits on all the tombs ;
Each shrine, —each altar seems to shake ; as if
Conscious of some important crisis. —

ZAMTI.

Yes ;
A crisis great indeed, is now at hand ! —
Heav'n holds its golden balance forth, and weighs
Zaphimri's and the Tartar's destiny,
While hov'ring angels tremble round the beam.
Hast thou beheld that picture ?

ETAN.

Fix'd attention
Hath paus'd on ev'ry part ; yet still to me
It shadows forth the forms of things unknown ; —
All imag'ry obscure, and wrapp'd in darkness.

ZAMTI.

That darkness my informing breath shall clear,
As morn dispels the night. Lo ! here display'd
This mighty kingdom's fall. —

ETAN.

Alas ! my father,
At sight of these sad colourings of woe,
Our tears will mix with honest indignation.

ZAMTI.

Nay, but survey it closer — see that child,
That royal infant, the last sacred relict
Of China's ancient line — see where a mandarine
Conveys the babe to his wife's fost'ring breast,
There to be nourish'd in an humble state ;
While their own son is sent to climes remote ;
That, should the dire usurper e'er suspect

The

The prince alive, he in his stead might bleed,
And mock the murd'rer's rage. —

ETAN.

Amazement thrills
Thro' all my frame, and my mind, big with wonder,
Feels ev'ry pow'r suspended. —

ZAMTI.

Rather say
That strong imagination burns within thee. —
Do'st thou not feel a more than common ardor? —

ETAN.

By heav'n my soul dilates with some new impulse;
Some strange inspir'd emotion — would the hour
Of fate were come — this night my dagger's hilt
I'll bury in the tyrant's heart. —

ZAMTI.

Wilt thou?

ETAN.

By all the mighty dead, that round us lie,
By all who this day groan in chains, I will.

ZAMTI.

And when thou dost — then tell him 'tis the prince
That strikes. —

ETAN.

The prince's wrongs shall nerve my arm
With tenfold rage.

ZAMTI.

Nay, but the prince himself!

ETAN.

What says my father? —

ZAMTI.

Thou art China's Orphan;
The last of all our kings — no longer Etan,
But now Zaphimri!

D 4

ZAPHIMRI.

ZAPHIMRI.

Ha!

ORASMING.

O wond'rous hand
Of heav'n!

ZAPHIMRI.

A crow'd of circumstances rise ——
Thy frequent hints obscure —— thy pious care
To train my youth to greatness. — Lend your aid
To my astonish'd pow'rs, that feebly bear
This unexpected shock of royalty.

ZAMTI.

Thou noble youth, now put forth all your strength,
And let heav'n's vengeance brace each sinew. ——

—— ZAPHIMRI.

Vengeance! ——

That word has shot its light'ning thro' my soul. ——
But tell me, Zamti — still 'tis wonder all ——
Am I indeed the Royal Orphan? ——

ZAMTI.

Thou; ——

Thou art the king, whom as my humble son,
I've nurtur'd in humanity and virtue.
Thy foes could never think to find thee here,
Ev'n in the lion's den; and therefore here
I've fix'd thy safe asylum, while my son
Hath dragg'd his life in exile. — Oh! my friends,
Morat will tell ye all, — each circumstance ——
Mean time —— there is your king! ——

All kneel to him.

ORASMING, ZIMVENTI.

Long live the Father of the eastern world!

ZAMTI.

Sole governor of earth! ——

ZAPHIMRI!

ZAPHIMRI.

All-ruling pow'rs! —

Is then a great revenge for all the wrongs
Of bleeding China; are the same and fate
Of all posterity included here
Within my bosom? —

They all rise.

ZAMTI.

Yes; they are; the shades
Of your great ancestors now rise before thee,
Heroes and demi-gods! — Aloud they call
For the fell Tartar's blood —.

ZAPHIMRI.

Oh! Zamti; all
That can alarm the pow'rs of man, now stirs
In this expanding breast. —

ZAMTI.

Anon to burst
With hideous ruin on the foe. — My gallant heroes,
Are our men station'd at their posts?

ORASMING.

They are. —

ZAMTI.

Is ev'ry gate secur'd?

ORASMING.

All safe. —

ZAMTI.

The signal fix'd? —

ORASMING.

It is: — Will Mirvan join us?

ZAMTI.

Doubt him not. —

In bitterness of soul he counts his wrongs,
And pants for vengeance — would have join'd us
here,

But

But, favour'd as he is, his post requires him
About the Tartar's person.—The assault begun,
He'll turn his arms upon th' astonish'd foe,
And add new horrors to the wild commotion.

ZAPHIMRI.

Now, bloody spoiler, now thy hour draws nigh,
And e'er the dawn thy guilty reign shall end.

ZAMTI.

How my heart burns within me!—Oh! my friends,
Call now to mind the scene of desolation,
Which Timurkan, in one accursed hour,
Heap'd on this groaning land.—Ev'n now I see
The savage bands, o'er reeking hills of dead,
Forcing their rapid way.—I see them urge
With rage unhallow'd to this sacred temple,
Where good Osmingti, with his queen and children,
Fatigu'd the Gods averse.—See where Arphisa,
Rending the air with agonizing shrieks,
Tears her dishevell'd hair: Then, with a look
Fix'd on her babes, grief choaks its passage up,
And all the feelings of a mother's breast
Throbbing in one mix'd pang, breathless she faints
Within her husband's arms.—Adown his cheek,
In copious streams fast flow'd the manly sorrow;
While clust'ring round his knees his little offspring,
In tears all-eloquent, with arms outstretch'd,
Sue for parental aid.—

ZAPHIMRI.

Go on—the tale
Will fit me for a scene of horror.—

ZAMTI.

Oh! my prince,
The charge, which your great father gave me, still
Sounds in my ear.—E'er yet the foe burst in,
“Zamti,” said he—Ah! that imploring eye!—
That

That agonizing look! —

“ Preserve my little boy, my cradled infant —

“ Shield him from ruffians — Train his youth to
virtue : —

“ Virtue will rouse him to a great revenge ;

“ Or failing — Virtue will still make him happy.”

He could no more — the cruel spoiler seiz'd him,
And dragg'd my king — my ever honour'd king, —
The father of his people, — basely dragg'd him
By his white rev'rend locks, from yonder altar,
Here, — on the blood-stain'd pavement ; while the
queen,

And her dear fondlings, in one mangled heap,
Died in each other's arms. —

ZAPHIMRI.

Revenge! Revenge!

With more than lion's nerve I'll spring upon him,
And at one blow relieve the groaning world.

Let us this moment carry sword and fire
To yon devoted walls, and overwhelm him down
In ruin and dismay. —

ZAMTI.

Zaphimri no. —

By rashness you may marr a noble cause.

To you, my friends, I render up my charge —

To you I give your king. — Farewell, my sov'reign. —

ZAPHIMRI.

Thou good, thou godlike man — a thousand feelings
Of warmest friendship — all the tendencies
Of heart-felt gratitude are struggling here,
And fain would speak to thee, my more than father.
— Farewel ; — sure we shall meet again. —

ZAMTI.

We shall —

ZAPHIMRI.

Farewell — Zamti, farewell. (*Embraces him*) Ora-
ming, now

The

The noblest duty calls us. — Now remember
 We are the men, whom from all human kind
 Our fate hath now selected, to come forth
 Asserters of the public weal; — to drench our swords
 In the oppressor's heart; — to do a deed
 Which heav'n, intent on its own holy work,
 Shall pause with pleasure to behold. —

[*Exit, with conspirators.*]

Z A M T I.

May the Most High
 Pour down his blessings on him; and anon,
 In the dead waste of night, when awful justice
 Walks with her crimson steel o'er slaughter'd heaps
 Of groaning Tartars, may he then direct
 His youthful footsteps thro' the paths of peril;
 Oh may he guide the horrors of the storm,
 An Angel of your wrath, to point your vengeance
 On ev'ry guilty head. — Then, — then 'twill be
 enough,

When you have broken the oppressor's rod,
 Your reign will then be manifest — Mankind will see
 That truth and goodness still obtain your care —

A dead march.

What mean those deathful sounds? — Again! —

They lead

My boy to slaughter — Oh! look down, ye heavens!
 Look down propitious! — Teach me to subdue
 That nature which ye gave. —

[*Exit.*]

*A dead march. Enter HAMET, OCTAR,
 guards, &c.*

O C T A R.

Here let the victim fall, and with his blood
 Wash his forefather's tomb. — Here ends the hated
 race. —

The eastern world thro' all her wide domain,

Shall

Shall then submissive feel the Scythian yoke,
And yield to Timurkan. —

HAMET. *Standing by the tomb.*

Where is the tyrant? — I would have him see,
With envy see, th' unconquer'd pow'r of virtue;
How it can calmly bleed, smile on his racks,
And with strong pinion soar above his pow'r,
To regions of perennial day. —

OCTAR.

The father
Of the whole eastern world shall mark thee well,
When at to-morrow's dawn thy breathless corse
Is born thro' all our streets for public view.
It now befits thee to prepare for death.

HAMET.

I am prepar'd. — I have no lust or rapine,
No murders to repent of. — Undismay'd
I can behold all-judging heav'n, whose hand
Still compassing its wond'rous ends, by means
Inextricable to all mortal clue,
Hath now inclos'd me in its awful maze.
Since 'tis by your decree that thus beset
Th' inexorable angel hovers o'er me,
Be your great bidding done. —

OCTAR.

The fabre's edge
Thirsts for his blood — then let its light'ning fall
On his aspiring head. — *Guards seize Hamet.*

MANDANE, *within.*

Off, — set me free. — Inhuman, barb'rous ruffians. —

OCTAR.

What means that woman with dishevell'd hair,
And wild extravagance of woe? —

MAN-

MANDANE.

My griefs

Scorn all restraint—I must—I will have way.—

She enters, and throws herself on her knees.

Me,—me, on me convert your rage—plunge deep,

Deep in this bosom your abhorred steel,

But spare his precious life.—

OCTAR.

Hence, quickly bear

This wild, this frantic woman.—

MANDANE.

Never, never —

You shall not force me hence. Here will I cling

Fast to the earth, and rivet here my hands,

In all the fury of the last despair.

He is my child, — my dear, dear son. —

OCTAR.

How, woman!

Saidst thou your son? —

MANDANE.

Yes, Octar, yes; — my son,

My boy,—my Hamet (*she rises and embraces him.*)

Let my frantic love

Fly all unbounded to him—oh! my child — my
child! —

OCTAR

Suspend the stroke, ye ministers of death,

Till Timurkan hear of this new event.

Mean time, thou Mirvan, speed in quest of Zamti,

And let him answer here this wond'rous tale. [*Exit.*

MIRVAN.

The time demands his presence; or despair

May wring each secret from her tender breast. *Aside.*

And then our glorious, fancied pile of freedom

At one dire stroke, shall tumble into nought.

[*Exit.*

MANDANE.

MANDANE.

Why did'st thou dare return? — ah! rather why
 Did'st thou so long defer with ev'ry grace,
 And ev'ry growing virtue, thus to raise
 Your mother's dear delight to rapture?

HAME T.

Loft

In the deep mists of darkling ignorance,
 To me my birth's unknown — but sure that look,
 Those tears, those shrieks, that animated grief
 Defying danger, all declare th'effect
 Of nature's strugglings in a parent's heart.
 Then let me pay my filial duty here,
 Kneel to her native dignity, and pour
 In tears of joy the transport of a son. —

MANDANE.

Thou art, thou art my son — thy father's face,
 His ev'ry feature, blooming in his boy.
 Oh! tell me, tell me all; how hast thou liv'd
 With faithful Morat? — how did he support
 In dreary solitude thy tender years? —
 How train thy growing mind? — oh! quickly tell
 me,

Oh! tell me all, and charm me with thy tongue.

HAME T.

Mysterious pow'rs! have I then liv'd to this,
 In th' hour of peril thus to find a parent,
 In virtue firm, majestic in distress,
 At length to feel unutterable bliss
 In her dear circling arms — *They embrace.*

Enter TIMURKAN, OCTAR, &c.

TIMURKAN.

Where is this wild
 Outrageous woman, who with frantic grief
 Suspends

Suspends my dread command—tear 'em asunder,—
 Send her to some dark cell to rave and shriek
 And dwell with madness — and let instant death
 Leave that rash youth a headless trunk before me.

MANDANE.

Now by the ever-burning lamps that light
 Our holy shrines, by great Confucius' altar,
 By the prime source of life, and light, and being,
 That is my child, the blossom of my joys —
 Send for his cruel father, — he — 'tis he
 Intends a fraud — he, for a stranger's life,
 Would yield his offspring to the cruel ax,
 And rend a wretched mother's brain with madness.

Enter ZAMTI.

Sure the sad accents of Mandane's voice
 Struck on my frightened sense. —

TIMURKAN.

Once more, thou slave! —
 Who is that stubborn youth?

ZAMTI.

Alas! what needs
 This iteration of my griefs?

MANDANE.

Oh! horror! — horror!
 Thou marble-hearted father! — 'tis your child,
 And would'st thou see him bleed? —

ZAMTI.

On him! — on him
 Let fall your rage, and ease my soul at once
 Of all its fears. —

MANDANE.

Oh! my devoted child!

She faints.

HAMET.

HAMET.

Support her, heav'n! support her tender frame —
Now, tyrant, now I beg to live — (*kneels*) lo! here
I plead for life; — not for the wretched boon
To breathe the air, which thy ambition taints; —
But oh! to ease a mother's pains; — for her,
For that dear object, — oh! let me live for her.

TIMURKAN.

Now by the conquests this good sword has won,
In her wild vehemence of grief I hear
The genuine voice of nature.

MANDANE, *recovering*.

Ah! — where is he?
He is my son — my child — and not Zaphimri —
Oh! let me clasp thee to my heart — thy hard,
Thy cruel father shall not tear thee from me. —

TIMURKAN.

Hear me, thou frantic mourner, dry those tears —
Perhaps you still may save this darling son. —

MANDANE.

Ah! quickly name the means. —

TIMURKAN

Give up your king,
Your phantom of a king, to fate my vengeance.

HAMET.

Oh! my much honour'd mother, never hear
The base, the dire proposal — let me rather
Exhaust my life-blood at each gushing vein.
Mandane then, — then you may well rejoice
To find your child, — then you may truly know
The best delight a mother's heart can prove,
When her son dies with glory. —

E

TIMURKAN.

TIMURKAN.

Curfes blast

The stripling's pride — *Talks apart with Oſtar.*

ZAMTI.

Ye venerable hoſt,

Ye mighty ſhades of China's royal line,

Forgive the joy that mingles with my tears,

When I behold him ſtill alive.—Propitious pow'rs!

You never meant entirely to deſtroy

This bleeding country, when your kind indulgence

Lends us a youth like him. —

Oh! I can hold no more — let me inſold

That lovely ardor in his father's arms —

My brave, — my gen'rous boy! — *Embraces him.*

TIMURKAN.

Doſt thou at length

Confess it, traitor? —

ZAMTI.

Yes, I boaſt it, tyrant;

Boaſt it to thee, — to earth and heav'n I boaſt,

This, — this is Zamti's ſon. —

HAMET.

At length the hour,

The glorious hour is come, by Morat promis'd,

“ When Hamet ſhall not bluſh to know his father.”

Kneels to him.

ZAMTI.

Oh! thou intrepid youth! — what bright reward

Can your glad fire beſtow on ſuch deſert? —

The righteous Gods, and your own inward feelings

Shall give the ſweeteſt retribution.—Now,

Mandane, now my ſoul forgives thee all,

Since I have made acquaintance with my ſon;

Thy lovely weakneſs I can now excuſe;

But oh! I charge thee by a huſband's right —

TIMURKAN.

TIMURKAN.

A husband's right! — a traitor has no right —
 Society disclaims him — Woman, hear —
 Mark well my words — discolour not thy soul
 With the black hue of crimes like his — renounce
 All hymeneal vows, and take again,
 Your much lov'd boy to his fond mother's arms,
 While justice whirls that traitor to his fate.

MANDANE.

Thou vile adviser! — what, betray my lord,
 My honour'd husband — turn a Scythian wife!
 Forget the many years of fond delight,
 In which my soul ne'er knew decreasing love,
 Charm'd with his noble, all accomplish'd mind!
 No, tyrant, no; — with him I'll rather die;
 With him in ruin more supremely blest,
 Than guilt triumphant on its throne. —

ZAMTI.

Now then
 Inhuman tyrant, I defy thy pow'r —
 Lo! here, the father, mother, and the son!
 Try all your tortures on us — here we stand
 Resolv'd to leave a tract of bright renown
 To mark our beings — all resolv'd to die
 The votaries of honour! —

TIMURKAN.

Then die ye shall — what ho! — guards, seize the
 slaves,
 Deep in some baleful dungeon's midnight gloom
 Let each apart be plung'd — and Etan too —
 Let him be forthwith found — he too shall share
 His father's fate. —

MIRVAN.

Be it my task, dread sir,
 To make the rack ingenious in new pains,

Till even cruelty almost relent
At their keen, agonizing groans. ———

TIMURKAN.

Brave Mirvan,
Be that thy care. — Now by th'immortal Lama
I'll wrest this myst'ry from 'em — else the dawn
Shall see me up in arms — 'gainst Corea's chief
I will unfurl my banners — his proud cities
Shall dread my thunder at their gates, and mourn
Their smoaking ramparts — o'er his verdant plains
And peaceful vales I'll drive my warlike carr,
And deluge all the east with blood. ——— [Exit.

ZAMTI.

Mandane, summon all thy strength. — My son,
Thy father doubts not of thy fortitude. [Exit.

OCTAR.

Mirvan, do thou bear hence those miscreant slaves.
[Exit, after Zamti.

MANDANE.

Allow me but one last embrace — *To the guards,*

HAMET.

Oh! mother,
Would I could rescue thee. ———

MANDANE.

Lost, lost again!

HAMET.

Inhuman, bloody Tartars.

Both together.

Oh! farewell. ———

[Exeunt, on different sides]

End of the Third Act.












A C T IV.

SCENE, a Prison. HAMET in chains.

Enter ZAPHIMRI (disguised in a Tartar dress)
with MIRVAN.

MIRVAN.




 HERE stretch'd at length on the dank



 ground he lies ;



 Scorning his fate. — Your meeting must
 be short. —

ZAPHIMRI.

It shall. —

MIRVAN.

And yet I tremble for th' event ; —
Why would'st thou venture to this place of danger ?

ZAPHIMRI.

And can'st thou deem me then so mean of spirit,
To dwell secure in ignominious safety ;
With cold insensibility to wait
The ling'ring hours, with coward patience wait 'em,
O'er Zamti's house while ruin nods ? —

MIRVAN.

Yet here,
Thy fate's suspended on each dreadful moment.

ZAPHIMRI.

I will hold converse with him ; ev'n tho' death
Were arm'd against the interview. — [*Exit Mirvan.*]

54 The ORPHAN of CHINA,

HAMET, *still on the ground.*

—What wouldst thou, Tartar?

ZAPHIMRI.

Rise, noble youth,—no vulgar errand mine——

HAMET, *comes forward.*

Now speak thy purpose.——

ZAPHIMRI.

Under this disguise——

HAMET, *opens his dress.*

If under that disguise, a murd'rer's dagger
Thirst for my blood——thus I can meet the blow.

Throwing himself open.

ZAPHIMRI.

No ruffian's purpose lurks within this bosom.
To these lone walls, where oft the Scythian stabber
With murd'rous stride hath come; these walls that
oft

Have seen th'assassin's deeds; I bring a mind
Firm, virtuous, upright.——Under this vile garb,
Lo! here a son of China.——*Opens his dress.*

HAMET.

Yes, thy garb
Denotes a son of China; and those eyes
Roll with no black intent.——Say on——

ZAPHIMRI.

Inflam'd with admiration of heroic deeds,
I come to seek acquaintance with the youth,
Who for his king would bravely die.——

HAMET.

Say then,
Dost thou applaud the deed?——

ZAPHIMRI.

By heav'n, I do.——

Yes,

Yes, virtuous envy rises in my soul —
 Thy ardor charms me, and ev'n now I pant
 To change conditions with thee. —

H A M E T.

Then my heart
 Accepts thy proffer'd friendship; — in a base,
 A prone, degen'rate age, when foreign force,
 And foreign manners have o'erwhelm'd us all,
 And sunk our native genius; — thou retain'st
 A sense of ancient worth. — But wherefore here,
 To this sad mansion, this abode of sorrow,
 Com'st thou to know a wretch that soon must die? —

Z A P H I M R I.

By heav'n, thou shalt not die — I come to speak
 The gladsome tidings of a happier fate. —
 By me Zaphimri sends —

H A M E T.

Zaphimri sends!
 Kind pow'rs! — Where is the king? —

Z A P H I M R I.

His steps are safe;
 Unseen as is the arrow's path. — By me he says,
 He knows, he loves, he wonders at thy virtue. —
 By me he swears, rather than thou should'st fall,
 He will emerge from dark obscurity,
 And greatly brave his fate. —

H A M E T.

Ha! — die for me!
 For me, ignoble in the scale of being;
 An unimportant wretch! — Whoe'er thou art,
 I prithee, stranger, bear my answer back —
 Oh! tell my sov'reign that here dwells a heart
 Superior to all peril. — When I fall,
 A worm, — an insect dies! — But in his life
 Are wrapp'd the glories of our ancient line,

56 The ORPHAN of CHINA.

The liberties of China!——Then let him
Live for his people——Be it mine to die.

ZAPHIMRI.

Can I bear this, ye pow'rs, and not dissolve
In tears of gratitude and love?—— *Aside.*

HAMET.

Why streams
That flood of grief? — and why that stifled groan?
Thro' the dark mist his sorrow casts around him,
He seems no common man.—Say, gen'rous youth,
Who and what art thou? ——

ZAPHIMRI.

Who and what am I! ——
Thou lead'st me to a precipice, from whence
Downward to look, turns wild the mad'ning brain,
Scar'd at th'unfathomable deep below. ——
Who, and what am I! — Oh! the veriest wretch
That ever yet groan'd out his soul in anguish.
One lost, abandon'd, hopeless, plung'd in woe
Beyond redemption's aid.——To tell thee all
In one dire word, big with the last distress,
In one accumulated term of horror, ——
——Zaphimri! ——

HAMET.

Said'st thou! ——

ZAPHIMRI.

He! —— that fatal wretch;
Exalted into misery supreme.
Oh! I was happy, while good Zamti's son
I walk'd the common tracts of life, and strove
Humbly to copy my imagin'd fire.
But now ——

HAMET.

Yes now — if thou art He —— as sure

'Tis

'Tis wond'rous like—rais'd to a state, in which
A nation's happiness on thee depends.

ZAPHIMRI.

A nation's happiness! — There, there I bleed —
There are my pangs. — For me this war began —
For me hath purple slaughter drench'd yon fields —
I am the cause of all. — I forg'd those chains —
For Zamti and Mandane too — Oh! heav'ns! —
Them have I thrown into a dungeon's gloom. —
These are the horrors of Zaphimri's reign. —
—I am the tyrant! — I ascend the throne
By trampling on the neck of innocence;
By base ingratitude; by the vile means
Of selfish cowardice, that can behold
Thee, and thy father, mother, all in chains,
All lost, all murder'd, that I thence may rise
Inglorious to a throne! —

H A M E T.

Alas! thy spirit,
Thy wild disorder'd fancy pictures forth
Ills, that are not — or, being ills, not worth
A moment's pause —

ZAPHIMRI.

Not ill! — thou can'st not mean it. —
Oh! I'm environ'd with the worst of woes; —
The angry fates, amidst their hoards of vengeance,
Had nought but this — they meant to render me
Peculiarly distress'd. — Tell me, thou gallant
youth, —
—A soul like thine knows ev'ry fine emotion, —
Is there a nerve, in which the heart of man
Can prove such torture, as when thus it meets
Unequal'd friendship, honour, truth, and love,
And no return can make? — Oh! 'tis too much,
Ye mighty Gods, too much — thus, — thus to be
A feeble prince, a shadow of a king,

Without

Without the pow'r to wreak revenge on guilt, —
 —Without the pow'r of doing virtue right. —

H A M E T.

That power will come. —

Z A P H I M R I.

But when? — when thou art lost, —
 When Zamti and Maridane are destroy'd —
 Oh! for a dagger's point, to plunge it deep,
 Deep in this — ha! — Deep in the tyrant's heart. —

H A M E T.

There your revenge should point. — For that great
 deed

Heav'n hath watch'd all thy ways; and wilt thou
 now

With headlong rage spurn at its guardian care,
 Nor wait the movements of eternal Justice? —

Z A P H I M R I.

Ha! — whither has my phrenzy stray'd? — Yes,
 heav'n

Has been all-bounteous. — Righteous pow'rs! —
 To you my orisons are due — But oh!

Complete your goodness: — Save this valiant
 youth; —

Save Zamti's house; and then, — if such your will,
 That from the Tartar's head my arm this night
 Shall grasp the crown of China — teach me then
 To bear your dread vicegerency. — I stand
 Resign'd to your high will. —

H A M E T.

And heav'n, I trust,
 Will still preserve thee; in its own good time
 Will finish its decrees. —

Z A P H I M R I.

Yes, Hamet, yes;
 A gleam of hope remains. — Should Timurkan
 Defer his murder to the midnight hour,

Then

Then will I come, — then burst these guilty walls,
Rend those vile manacles, and give thee freedom.

H A M E T.

Oh! no — you must not risk —

Z A P H I M R I.

A band of heroes
For this are ready; honourably leagu'd
To vindicate their rights. — Thy father's care
Plann'd and inspir'd the whole. — Among the troops,
Nay in his very guards, there are not wanting
Some gallant sons of China, in that hour,
Who will discover their long-pent-up fury,
And deal destruction round. —

H A M E T.

What — all conven'd,
And ev'ry thing dispos'd?

Z A P H I M R I.

Determin'd! — Now
In silent terror all intent they stand,
And wait the signal in each gale that blows.

H A M E T.

Why did'st thou venture forth?

Z A P H I M R I.

What, poorly lurk
While my friends die! — that thought — but, gene-
rous youth,
I'll not think meanly of thee — No — that thought
Is foreign to thy heart. —

H A M E T.

But think, my prince,
On China's wrongs, the dying heroes' groans;
Think on thy ancestors. —

Z A P H I M R I.

My ancestors!
What is't to me a long-descended line,
A race of worthies, legislators, heroes, —
— Unless I bring their virtues too? — No more —

Thy

Thy own example fires me.—— Near this place
I'll take my stand, and watch their busy motions,
Until the gen'ral roar;—then will I come,
And arm thee for th' assault.——

H A M E T.

Oh! if thou do'st,
Yet once again I'll wield the deathful blade,
And bear against the foe.——

Z A P H I M R I.

Yes, thou and I
Will rush together thro' the paths of death,
Mow down our way, and with sad overthrow
Pursue the Tartar — like two rushing torrents,
That from the mountain's top, 'midst roaring caves,
'Midst rocks and rent-up trees, foam headlong down,
And each depopulates his way.——

A flourish of trumpets.

H A M E T.

What means
That sudden and wild harmony? ——

Z A P H I M R I.

Even now
The conqu'ror, and his fell barbaric rout,
For this day's victory indulge their joy;
Joy soon to end in groans — for all conspires
To forward our design — and lo! the lights
That whilom blaz'd to heav'n, now rarely seen
Shed a pale glimmer, and the foe secure
Sinks down in deep debauch; while all awake,
The genius of this land broods o'er the work
Of justice and revenge. ——

H A M E T.

Oh! revel on,
Still unsuspecting plunge in guilty joy,
And bury thee in riot.——

Z A P H I M R I.

ZAPHIMRI.

Ne'er again

To wake from that vile trance—for e'er the dawn,

Detested spoiler, thy hot blood shall smoke

On the stain'd marble, and thy limbs abhorr'd

I'll scatter to the dogs of China.—

Enter MIRVAN.

MIRVAN.

Break off your conf'rence—Octar this way comes.

ZAPHIMRI.

This garb will cloak me from each hostile eye;

Thou need'st not fear detection.—

Enter OCTAR.

MIRVAN.

There's your pris'ner.— *Pointing to Hamet.*

OCTAR.

Lead him to where Mandane's matron grief

Rings thro' yon vaulted roof.—

HAMET.

Oh! lead me to her;

Let me give balm to her afflicted mind;

And soften anguish in a parent's breast.

[Exit, with Mirvan.]

ZAPHIMRI.

What may this mean?—I dread some lurking
mischief.— *[Exit on the opposite side.]*

OCTAR.

When the boy clings around his mother's heart

In fond endearment, then to tear him from her,

Will once again awaken all her tenderness,

And in her impotence of grief, the truth

At

At length will burst its way.— But Timurkan
Impatient comes.——

Enter TIMURKAN

OCTAR.

Thus with disorder'd looks,
Why will my sov'reign shun the genial banquet,
To seek a dungeon's gloom?

TIMURKAN.

Oh! valiant Octar,
A more than midnight gloom involves my soul.
Hast thou beheld this stubborn mandarine?

OCTAR.

I have; and tried by ev'ry threaten'd vengeance
To bend his soul: Unconquer'd yet by words
He smiles contempt; as if some inward joy,
Like the sun lab'ring in a night of clouds,
Shot forth its glad'ning unresisted beams,
Chearing the face of woe. ——

TIMURKAN.

What of Mandane? ——

OCTAR.

At first with tears and bitter lamentations
She call'd on Hamet lost; — but when I urg'd,
She still might save her boy, and save herself,
Would she but give Zaphimri to your wrath,
Her tears forgot to flow; — her voice, her look,
Her colour sudden chang'd, and all her form
Enlarging with th' emotions of her soul,
Grew vaster to the sight.— With blood-shot eyes
She cast a look of silent indignation,
Then turn'd in sullen mood away.

TIMURKAN.

Perdition
O'erwhelm her pride. ——

OCTAR.

OCTAR.

Might I advise you, fir,
 An artful tale of love should softly glide
 To her afflicted soul — a conqueror's sighs
 Will waft a thousand wishes to her heart,
 Till female vanity aspire to reach
 The eastern throne; and when her virtue melts
 In the soft tumult of her gay desires,
 Win from her ev'ry truth, then spurn to shame
 The weak, deluded woman. —

TIMURKAN.

Octar, no —

I cannot stoop with love-sick adulation
 To thrill in languishing desire, and try
 The hopes, the fears, and the caprice of love.
 Enur'd to rougher scenes, far other arts
 My mind employ'd,—to sling the well-stor'd quiver
 O'er this manly arm, and wing the dart
 At the fleet rain-deer, sweeping down the vale,
 Or up the mountain, straining ev'ry nerve:
 To vault the neighing steed, and urge his course
 Swifter than whirlwinds — thro' the ranks of war
 To drive my chariot-wheels, smoking with gore:
 These are my passions, this my only science,
 Above the puling sicknesses of love,
 Bring that vile slave, the hoary priest, before me.

[Exit Octar.]

TIMURKAN.

By heav'n their fortitude erects a fence
 To shield 'em from my wrath, more pow'rful far
 Than their high-boasted wall, which long hath stood
 The shock of time, of war, of storms, and thunder,
 The wonder of the world! —

What art thou, Virtue, who can't thus inspire
 This stubborn pride, this dignity of soul,
 And still unfading, beauteous in distress,
 Can't taste of joys, my heart hath never known?

Enter

Enter ZAMTI, in chains.

TIMURKAN.

Mark me, thou traitor, thy detested sight
Once more I brook, to try if yet the sense
Of deeds abhorr'd as thine, has touch'd your soul.
Or clear this myst'ry, or by yonder heav'n
I'll hunt Zaphimri to his secret haunt,
Or spread a gen'ral carnage round the world.

ZAMTI.

Thy rage is vain — far from thy ruthless pow'r
Kind heav'n protects him, till the awful truth
In some dread hour of horror and revenge
Shall burst like thunder on thee. —

TIMURKAN.

Ha! — beware,
Nor rouse my lion-rage — yet, ere 'tis late,
Repent thee of thy crimes. —

ZAMTI.

The crime would be
To yield to thy unjust commands. — But know
A louder voice than thine forbids the deed ;
The voice of all my kings! — forth from their tombs
Ev'n now they send a peal of groans to heav'n,
Where all thy murders are long since gone up,
And stand in dread array against thee. -

TIMURKAN.

Murders !
Ungrateful mandarine ! — say, did not I,
When civil discord lighted up her brand
And scatter'd wide her flames ; when fierce conten-
tion

'Twixt Xohohamti and Zaphimri's father
Sorely convuls'd the realm ; did not I then

Lead

Lead forth my Tartars from their northern frontier,
And bid fair order rise?

ZAMTI.

Bid order rise!
Hast thou not smote us with a hand of wrath?
By thee each art has died, and ev'ry science
Gone out at thy fell blast — art thou not come
To sack our cities, to subvert our temples,
The temples of our Gods, and with the worship,
The monstrous worship of your living Lama,
Prophane our holy shrines?

TIMURKAN.

Peace, insolent,
Nor dare with horrid treason to provoke
The wrath of injur'd majesty. —

ZAMTI.

Yes, tyrant,
Yes, thou hast smote us with a hand of wrath;
Full twenty years hast smote us; but at length
Will come the hour of heav'n's just visitation,
When thou shalt rue — hear me, thou man of
blood —

Yes, thou shalt rue the day, when thy fell rage
Imbrued those hands in royal blood — now tremble —
The arm of the Most High is bar'd against thee —
And see! — the hand of fate describes thy doom
In glaring letters on yon rubied wall! —
Each gleam of light is perish'd out of heav'n,
And darkness rushes o'er the face of earth.

TIMURKAN.

Think'st thou, vile slave, with visionary fears
I e'er can shrink appal'd? — thou moon-struck seer!
No more I'll bear this mockery of words —
Or strait resolve me, or, by hell and vengeance,
Unheard-of torment waits thee —

F

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Know'st thou not
 I offer'd up my boy?—and after that,
 After that conflict, think'st thou there is aught
 Zamti has left to fear? —

TIMURKAN.

Yes, learn to fear
 My will—my sov'reign will—which here is law,
 And treads upon the neck of slaves. —

ZAMTI.

Thy will
 The law in China!—Ill-instructed man!—
 Now learn an awful truth,——Tho' ruffian pow'r
 May for a while suppress all sacred order,
 And trample on the rights of man;——the soul,
 Which gave our legislation life and vigour,
 Shall still subsist — above the tyrant's reach. —
 —The spirit of the laws can never die. —

TIMURKAN.

I'll hear no more.—What ho! — (*Enter Octar, and
 guards*) — Bring forth Mandane —
 Ruin involves ye all—this very hour
 Shall see your son impal'd.—Yes, both your sons. —
 Let Etan be brought forth. —

OCTAR.

Etan, my liege,
 Is fled for safety. —

TIMURKAN.

Thou pernicious slave! To Zamti.
 Him too would'st thou withdraw from justice? —
 —him

Would'st thou send hence to Corea's realm, to brood
 O'er some new work of treason? — By the pow'rs
 Who feel a joy in vengeance, and delight
 In human blood, I will unchain my fury

On

On all, who trace Zaphimri in his years;
But chief on thee, and thy devoted race.

Enter MANDANE and HAMET.

Mirvan guarding them, &c.

TIMURKAN.

Woman, attend my words—instant reveal
This dark conspiracy, and save thyself.—
If willful thou wilt spurn the joys that woo thee,
The rack shall have its prey,——

MANDANE.

It is in vain.——
I tell thee, Homicide, my soul is bound
By solemn vows; and wouldst thou have me break
What angels wafted on their wings to heav'n?

TIMURKAN.

Renounce your rash resolves, nor court destruction.

MANDANE.

Goddeſs of vengeance, from your realms above,
Where near the throne of the Moſt High thou
dwell'ſt,
Inſpher'd in darkneſs, amidſt hoards of thunder,
Serenely dreadful, 'till dire human crimes
Provoke thee down; now, on the whirlwind's wing
Deſcend, and with your flaming ſword, your bolts
Red with almighty wrath, let looſe your rage,
And blaſt this vile ſeducer in his guilt.

TIMURKAN,

Blind frantic woman!—think on your lov'd boy.—

MANDANE.

That tender ſtruggle's o'er—if he muſt die,
I'll greatly dare to follow.——

F 2

TIMURKAN.

TIMURKAN.

Then forthwith
 I'll put thee to the proof—Drag forth the boy
 To instant death.—— *They seize Hamet.*

HAME T.

Come on then——Lead me hence
 To some new world where justice reigns, for here
 Thy iron hand is stretch'd o'er all.——

[Exit, guarded.]

TIMURKAN.

Quick, drag him forth.

MANDANE.

Now by the pow'rs above, by ev'ry tie
 Of humanizing pity, seize me first ;—
 Oh ! spare my child, and end his wretched mother.

TIMURKAN.

Thou plead'ft in vain.——

*Enter a Messenger in haste.**Messenger.*

Etan, dread fir, is found.——

ZAMTI.

Ah ! China totters on the brink of ruin. *Aside.*

TIMURKAN.

Where lurk'd the slave ?

Messenger.

Emerging from disguise,
 He rush'd amid the guards that led forth Hamet ;
 “ Suspend the stroke,” he cry'd ; then crav'd ad-
 mittance

To your dread presence, on affairs, he says,
 Of highest import to your throne and life.

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Ruin impends. (*aside*) Heed not an idle boy.—
To Timurkan.

TIMURKAN.

Yes, I will see him—bring him strait before me.

ZAMTI.

Angels of light, quick on the rapid wing
Dart from the throne of grace, and hover round
him.

Enter ZAPHIMRI, guards following him.

TIMURKAN.

Thou com'st on matters of importance deep
Unto my throne and life.—

ZAPHIMRI.

I do.—This very hour
Thy death is plotting.—

TIMURKAN.

Ha! —by whom?

ZAPHIMRI.

Zaphimri!

ZAMTI.

What means my son? —

TIMURKAN.

Quick, give him to my rage,
And mercy shall to thee extend.—

ZAPHIMRI.

Think not
I meanly come to save this wretched being.—

Pity Mandane—Save her tender frame— *Kneels.*

Pity that youth—oh! save that godlike man.—

ZAMTI.

Wilt thou dishonour me, degrade thyself,
F 3 Thy

Thy native dignity by basely kneeling? —
Quit that vile posture. —

TIMURKAN.

Rash intruder, hence. — *To Zamti.*
Hear me, thou stripling; — or unfold thy tale,
Or by yon heav'n they die — Would'st thou appease
my wrath?

— Bring me Zaphimri's head. —

ZAPHIMRI.

Will that suffice?

ZAMTI.

Oh! heavens!

Aside.

TIMURKAN.

It will; —

ZAPHIMRI.

Then take it, tyrant.

Rising up, and pointing to himself.

ZAMTI. HAMET.

Ah!

ZAPHIMRI.

I am Zaphimri — I your mortal foe. —

ZAMTI.

Now by yon heav'n! it is not. —

ZAPHIMRI.

Here — strike here —

Since nought but royal blood can quench thy thirst. —
Unsluice these veins, — but spare their matchless
lives. —

TIMURKAN.

Would'st thou deceive me too?

ZAMTI.

He would —

ZAPHIMRI.

No — here,

Here on his knees, Zaphimri begs to die. —

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Oh! horror, 'tis my son — by great Confucius,
That is my Etan, my too gen'rous boy,
That fain would die to save his aged sire.——

MANDANE.

Alas! all's ruin'd — freedom is no more. — *Aside.*

ZAPHIMRI.

Yet hear me, Tartar — hear the voice of truth —
I am your victim — by the gods, I am. ——

Laying hold of Timurkan.

TIMURKAN.

Thou early traitor! — train'd by your guilty sire
To deeds of fraud — no more these arts prevail. —
My rage is up in arms, ne'er to know rest,
Until Zaphimri perish. — Off, vile slave ——
This very moment sweep 'em from my sight.

MANDANE.

Alas! my husband — Oh! my son, my son ——

ZAMTI.

May all the host of heav'n protect him still.

*[Exeunt Zamti and Mandane,
guarded by Ostar, &c.]*

ZAPHIMRI, *struggling with Timurkan, on his
knees.*

Ah! yet withhold — in pity hold a moment ——
I am Zaphimri — I resign my crown ——

TIMURKAN.

Away, vain boy! — go see them bleed — behold
How they will writhe in pangs; —— pangs doom'd
for thee,
And ev'ry strippling thro' the east. —— Vile slave,
away! *Breaks from him, and exit.*

ZAPHIMRI, *lying on the ground; officers and guards behind him.*

Oh! cruel! — yet a moment — Barbarous Scythians! —

Wilt thou not open earth, and take me down,
Down to thy caverns of eternal darkness,
From this supreme of woe? — Here will I lie,
Here on thy flinty bosom, — with this breast
I'll harrow up my grave, and end at once
This pow'rless wretch, — this ignominious king! —
— And sleeps almighty Justice? Will it not
Now waken all its terrors? — arm yon band
Of secret heroes with avenging thunder?
By heaven that thought (*rising*) lifts up my kind-
ling soul

With renovated fire (*aside.*) My glorious friends,
(Who now convene big with your country's fate,
When I am dead, — oh! give me just revenge —
Let not my shade rise unatton'd amongst ye; —
Let me not die inglorious; — make my fall
With some great act of yet unheard-of vengeance,
Resound throughout the world; that farthest Scythia
May stand appall'd at the huge distant roar
Of one vast ruin tumbling on the heads
Of this fell tyrant, and his hated race.

[*Exit, guarded.*

End of the Fourth Act.



A C T V.

*Enter OCTAR; ZAMTI and MANDANE,
— following him.*

ZAMTI.

HY dost thou lead us to this hated
mansion?

W Must we again behold the tyrant's
frown?

Thou know'st our hearts are fix'd. —

OCTAR.

The war of words

We scorn again to wage — hither ye come

Beneath a monarch's eye to meet your doom.

The rack is now preparing — Timurkan

Shall soon behold your pangs, and count each groan.

Ev'n to the fullest luxury of vengeance.

Guard well that passage (*to the guards within*), see
these traitors find

No means of flight; while to the conqueror

I hasten, to receive his last commands.

[*Exit Octar, on the opposite side.*]

ZAMTI and MANDANE.

ZAMTI.

Thou ever faithful creature —

MANDANE.

Can'st thou, Zamti,

Still call me faithful? — by that honour'd name
Wilt

Wilt thou call her, whose mild maternal love
Hath overwhelm'd us all? —

ZAMTI.

Thou art my wife,
Whose matchless excellence, ev'n in bondage,
Hath cheer'd my soul; but now thy ev'ry charm,
By virtue waken'd, kindled by distress
To higher lustre, all my passions beat
Unutterable gratitude and love.
And must — oh! cruel! — must I see the bleed? —

MANDANE.

For me death wears no terror on his brow —
Full twenty years hath this resounding breast
Been smote with these sad hands; these haggard eyes
Have seen my country's fall; my dearest husband,
My son, — my king, — all in the Tartar's hands:
What then remains for me? — Death, — only death.

ZAMTI.

Ah! can thy tenderness endure the pangs
Inventive cruelty ev'n now designs? —
Must this fair form — this soft perfection bleed?
Thy decent limbs be strain'd with cruel cords,
To glut a ruffian's rage? —

MANDANE.

Alas! this frame,
This feeble texture never can sustain it.
But this — this I can bear — *Shews a dagger.*

ZAMTI.]

Ha!

MANDANE.

Yes! — this dagger! —
Do thou but lodge it in this faithful breast;
My heart shall spring to meet thee. —

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Oh!

MANDANE.

Do thou,
My honour'd lord, who taught'st me ev'ry virtue,
Afford this friendly, this last human office,
And teach me now to die. ———

ZAMTI:

Oh! never ——— never ———

Hence let me bear this fatal instrument ———

Takes the dagger.

What, to usurp the dread prerogative
Of life and death, and measure out the thread
Of our own beings! — 'Tis the coward's act,
Who dares not to encounter pain and peril ———
Be that the practice of th'untutor'd savage; ———
Be it the practice of the gloomy north. ———

MANDANE.

Must we then wait a haughty tyrant's nod,
The vassals of his will? — no — let us rather
Nobly break thro' the barriers of this life,
And join the beings of some other world,
Who'll throng around our greatly daring souls,
And view the deed with wonder and applause. —

ZAMTI.

Distress too exquisite! ——— ye holy pow'rs,
If aught below can supersede your law,
And plead for wretches, who dare, self-impell'd,
Rush to your awful presence; — oh! — it is not
When the distemper'd passions rage; when pride
Is stung to madness; when ambition falls
From his high scaffolding; — oh! no — if aught
Can justify the blow, it is when virtue
Has nothing left to do; ——— when liberty
No more can breathe at large; — 'tis with the groans
Of our dear country when we dare to die.

MANDANE.

MANDANE.

Then here at once direct the friendly steel.

ZAMTI.

One last adieu! — now! — ah! does this become
Thy husband's love? — thus with uplifted blade
Can I approach that bosom-bliss, where oft
With other looks than these — oh! my Mandane —
I've hush'd my cares within thy shelt'ring arms? —

MANDANE.

Alas! the loves that hover'd o'er our pillows
Have spread their pinions, never to return,
And the pale fates surround us —
Then lay me down in honourable rest;
Come, as thou art, all hero, to my arms,
And free a virtuous wife —

ZAMTI.

It must be so —

Now then prepare thee — my arm flags and droops
Conscious of thee in ev'ry trembling nerve.

Dashes down the dagger.

By heav'n once more I would not raise the point
Against that hoard of sweets, for endless years
Of universal empire.

MANDANE.

Ha! the fell ministers of wrath — and yet
They shall not long insult us in our woes.
Myself will still preserve the means of death.

Takes up the dagger.

Enter TIMURKAN and OCTAR.

TIMURKAN.

Now then, detested pair, your hour is come —
Drag forth these slaves to instant death and torment.
I hate this dull delay; I burn to see them
Gasping in death, and weltr'ing in their gore.

MANDANE.

MANDANE.

Zamti, support my steps — with thee to die
Is all the boon Mandane now would crave.

[*Exeunt.*]

TIMURKAN and OCTAR.

TIMURKAN.

Those rash, presumptuous boys, are they brought
forth?

OCTAR.

Mirvan will lead the victims to their fate.

TIMURKAN.

And yet what boots their death?—the Orphan lives,
And in this breast fell horror and remorse
Must be the dire inhabitants.——Octar, still
These midnight visions shake my inmost soul.——

OCTAR.

And shall the shad'wings of a feverish brain
Disturb a conqu'ror's breast? ——

TIMURKAN.

Octar, they've made
Such desolation here—'tis drear and horrible! ——
On yonder couch, soon as sleep clos'd my eyes,
All that yon mad enthusiastic priest
In mystic rage denounc'd, rose to my view;
And ever and anon a livid flash,
From conscience shot, shew'd to my aching sight
The colours of my guilt ——
Billows of blood were round me; and the ghosts,
The ghosts of heroes, by my rage destroy'd,
Came with their ghastly orbs, and streaming wounds;
They stalk'd around my bed; — with loud acclaim
They call'd Zaphimri! 'midst the lightning's blaze
Heav'n roll'd consenting thunders o'er my head;
Strait from his covert the youth sprung upon me,
And shook his gleaming steel—he hurl'd me down,
Down

Down headlong, down the drear — hold, hold!
where am I?

Oh! this dire whirl of thought—my brain's on fire—

OCTAR.

Compose this wild disorder of thy soul.
Your foes this moment die. —

Enter MIRVAN.

TIMURKAN.

What would'st thou, Mirvan?

MIRVAN.

Near to the eastern gate, a slave reports,
As on his watch he stood, a gleam of arms
Cast a dim lustre thro' the night; and strait
The steps of men thick sounded in his ear;
In close array they march'd.

TIMURKAN.

Some lurking treason! —

What, ho! my arms—ourselves will sally forth. —

MIRVAN.

My liege, their scanty and rash-levied crew
Want not a monarch's sword — the valiant Octar,
Join'd by yon faithful guard, will soon chastise them.

TIMURKAN.

Then be it so — Octar, draw off the guard,
And bring their leaders bound in chains before me.
[Exit Octar.]

TIMURKAN and MIRVAN.

MIRVAN.

With sure conviction we have further learn'd
The long-contended truth — Etan's their king —
The traitor Zamti counted but one son;

And

And him he sent far hence to Corea's realm,
That should it e'er be known the prince surviv'd,
The boy might baffle justice. —

TIMURKAN.

Ha! this moment
Ourself will see him fall. —

MIRVAN.

Better, my liege,
At this dead hour you sought repose — mean time
Justice on him shall hold her course. — Your foes
Else might still urge that you delight in blood.
The semblance of humanity will throw
A veil upon ambition's deeds — 'tis thus
That mighty conquerors thrive; — and even vice,
When it would prosper, borrows virtue's mien.

TIMURKAN.

Mirvan, thou counsel'st right: beneath a shew
Of public weal we lay the nations waste.
And yet these eyes shall never know repose,
Till they behold Zaphimri perish. Mirvan,
Attend me forth.

MIRVAN.

Forgive, my sov'reign liege,
Forgive my over-forward zeal — I knew
It was not fitting he should breathe a moment:
The truth once known, I rush'd upon the victim,
And with this sabre cleft him to the ground.

TIMURKAN.

Thanks to great Lama! — treason is no more,
And their boy king is dead, — Mirvan, do thou
This very night bring me the stripling's head.
Soon as the dawn shall purple yonder east,
Aloft in air all China shall behold it,
Parch'd by the sun, and weltring to the wind:
Haste, Mirvan, haste, and sate my fondest wish.

MIRVAN.

MIRVAN.

This hour approves my loyalty and truth: [Exit.

TIMURKAN.

Their deep-laid plot hath miss'd its aim, and Timurkan

May reign secure — no longer horrid dreams
Shall hover round my couch — the prostrate world
Henceforth shall learn to own my sov'reign sway.

Enter MIRVAN

TIMURKAN.

Well, Mirvan, hast thou brought the wish'd-for
pledge?

MIRVAN.

My liege, I fear 'twill strike thy soul with horror?

TIMURKAN.

By heav'n the sight will glad my longing eyes.
Oh! give it to me. —

*Enter ZAPHIMRI (a sabre in his hand) and
plants himself before the tyrant.*

TIMURKAN.

Ha! then all is lost.

ZAPHIMRI.

Now, bloody Tartar, now then know Zaphimri.

TIMURKAN.

Accursed treason! — to behold thee thus
Alive before me, blasts my aching eye-balls:
My blood forgets to move — each pow'r dies in
me —

ZAPHIMRI.

ZAPHIMRI.

Well may'st thou tremble, well may guilt like thine
Shrink back appall'd ; — for now avenging heav'n
In me sends forth its minister of wrath,
To deal destruction on thee. —

TIMURKAN.

Treach'rous slave !
'Tis false ! — with coward-art, a base assassin,
A midnight ruffian on my peaceful hour
Secure thou com'st, thus to assault a warrior,
Thy heart could never dare to meet in arms.

ZAPHIMRI.

Not meet thee, Tartar ! — Ha ! — in me thou see'st
One on whose head unnumber'd wrongs thou'st
heap'd —
Else could I scorn thee, thus defenceless. — Yes,
By all my great revenge, could bid thee try each
shape,
Assume each horrid form, come forth array'd
In all the terrors of destructive guilt ; —
But now a dear, a murder'd father calls ;
He lifts my arm to rivet thee to earth,
Th' avenger of mankind.

MIRVAN.

Fall on, my prince.

TIMURKAN.

By heav'n, I'll dare thee still ; resign it, slave,
Resign thy blade to nobler hands.

Snatches Mirvan's sabre.

MIRVAN.

O ! horror
What ho ! bring help. — Let not the fate of China
Hang on the issue of a doubtful combat.

G

TIMURKAN.

TIMURKAN.

Come on, presumptuous boy.

ZAPHIMRI.

Inhuman regicide!

Now, lawless ravager, Zaphimri comes

To wreak his vengeance on thee. [*Exeunt fighting.*]MIRVAN, *solus.*Oh! nerve his arm, ye pow'rs, and guide each
blow.*To him, enter HAMET.*

MIRVAN.

See there! — behold — he darts upon his prey. —

ZAPHIMRI, *within.*

Die, bloodhound, die —

TIMURKAN, *within.*

May curses blast my arm

That fail'd so soon. —

HAMET.

The Tartar drops his point. —

Zaphimri now —

TIMURKAN, *within.*

— Have mercy! — mercy! — oh!

ZAPHIMRI, *within.*

Mercy was never thine — This, fell destroyer,

This, for a nation's groans. —

MIRVAN.

The monster dies; —

He

He quivers on the ground — Then let me fly
To Zamti and Mandane with the tidings,
And call them back to liberty and joy.

[*Exit Mirvan.*]

HAMET *remains*; to him ZAPHIMRI.

ZAPHIMRI.

Now, Hamet, now oppression is no more:
This smoaking blade hath drunk the tyrant's blood,

HAMET.

China again is free; — there lies the corse
That breath'd destruction to the world.

ZAPHIMRI.

Yes, there,
Tyrannic guilt, behold thy fatal end,
The wages of thy fins. —

Enter MORAT.

MORAT.

Where is the king?
Revenge now stalks abroad. — Our valiant leaders,
True to the destin'd hour, at once broke forth
From ev'ry quarter on th' astonish'd foe;
Octar is fall'n; — all cover'd o'er with wounds
He met his fate; and still the slaughter'ring sword
Invades the city, sunk in sleep and wine.

ZAPHIMRI.

Lo! Timurkan lies levell'd with the dust!
Send forth, and let Orasming strait proclaim
Zaphimri king; — my subjects rights restor'd.

[*Exit Morat.*]

Now, where is Zamti? where Mandane? — ha! —
What means that look of wan despair?

Enter MIRVAN.

Oh ! dire mischance !

While here I trembled for the great event,
The unrelenting slaves, whose trade is death,
Began their work.—Nor piety, nor age,
Could touch their felon-hearts——they seiz'd on
Zamti,

And bound him on the wheel——all frantic at the
sight,

Mandane plung'd a poniard in her heart,
And at her husband's feet expir'd.——

H A M E T.

Oh ! heav'ns !
My mother! ——

Z A P H I M R I.

Fatal rashness !——Mirvan, say,
Is Zamti too destroy'd? ——

M I R V A N.

Smiling in pangs,
We found the good, the venerable man :
Releas'd from anguish, with what strength remain'd,
He reach'd the couch, where lost Mandane lay ;
There threw his mangled limbs;——there, cling-
ing to the body,
Prints thousand kisses on her clay-cold lips,
And pours his sad lamentings, in a strain
Might call each pitying angel from the sky,
To sympathize with human woe.——

The great folding doors open in the back scene.

Z A P H I M R I.

And see,
See on that mournful bier he clasps her still ;
Still hangs upon each faded feature ; still

To

To her deaf ear complains in bitter anguish.
Heart-piercing sight! —

H A M E T.

Oh! agonizing scene!

*The corpse is brought forward, Zamti lying on
on the couch, and clasping the dead body.*

Z A M T I.

Ah! stay, Mandane, stay, — yet once again
Let me behold the day-light of thy eyes —
Gone, gone, for ever, ever gone — those orbs
That ever gently beam'd, must dawn no more.

Z A P H I M R I.

Are these our triumphs? — these our promis'd joys?

Z A M T I.

The music of that voice recalls my soul.

*[Rises from the body, and runs eagerly to embrace Zaphimri; his strength fails him, and
he faints at his feet.]*

My prince! my king!

Z A P H I M R I.

Soft, raise him from the ground.

Z A M T I.

Zaphimri! — Hamet too! — oh! bless'd event!
I could not hope such tidings — thee, my prince,
Thee too, my son — I thought ye both destroy'd.
My slow remains of life cannot endure
These strong vicissitudes of grief and joy.
And there — oh! heav'n! — see there, there lies
Mandane!

H A M E T.

How fares it now, my father?

Z A M T I.

Lead me to her —

Is that the ever dear, the faithful woman?

Is that my wife? — and is it thus at length,
Thus do I see thee then, Mandane? — cold,
Alas! death-cold —
Cold is that breast, where virtue from above
Made its delighted sojourn, and those lips
That utter'd heav'nly truth, — pale! pale! — dead,
dead! *Sinks on the body.*
Pray ye entomb me with her? —

ZAPHIMRI.

Then take, ye pow'rs, then take your conquests back;
Zaphimri never can survive —

ZAMTI, *raising himself.*

I charge thee live ; ———
A base desertion of the public weal
Will ill become a king ——— alas ! my son, ———
(By that dear tender name if once again
Zamti may call thee) ——— tears will have their way ———
Forgive this flood of tenderness ——— my heart
Melts even now ——— thou noble youth — this is
The only interview we e'er shall have. ———

ZAPHIMRI.

And will ye then, inexorable pow'rs,
Will ye then tear him from my aching heart?—

ZAMTI.

The moral duties of the private man
Are grafted in thy soul — oh ! still remember
The mean immutable of happiness,
Or in the vale of life, or on a throne,
Is virtue — each bad action of a king
Extends beyond his life, and acts again
Its tyranny o'er ages yet unborn.
To error mild, severe to guilt, protect
The helpless innocent ; and learn to feel
The best delight of serving human kind.

Be

Be these, my prince, thy arts; be these thy cares,
And live the father of a willing people.

H A M E T.

My father! — see — ah! see! — he dies — his lips
Tremble in agony — his eye-balls glare —
A death-like paleness spreads o'er all his face.

Z A P H I M R I.

Is there no help to save so dear a life?

Z A M T I.

It is too late — I die — alas! I die —
Life harrass'd out, pursu'd with barb'rous art
Thro' ev'ry trembling joint — now fails at once —
Zaphimri — oh! farewell! — I shall not see
The glories of thy reign — Hamet! — my son —
Thou good young man, farewell — Mandane, yes,
My soul with pleasure takes her flight, that thus
Faithful in death, I leave these cold remains
Near thy dear honour'd clay. — *Dies.*

Z A P H I M R I.

And art thou gone,
Thou best of men? — then must Zaphimri pine
In ever-during grief, since thou art lost;
Since that firm patriot, whose parental care
Should raise, should guide, should animate my virtues,
Lies there a breathless corse. —

H A M E T.

My liege, forbear, —
Live for your people; madness and despair
Belong to woes like mine. —

Z A P H I M R I.

Thy woes, indeed,
Are deep, thou pious youth — yes, I will live,
To soften thy afflictions; to assuage
A nation's grief, when such a pair expires.
Come to my heart: — in thee another Zamti

Shall

Shall bless the realm — now let me hence to hail
My people with the sound of peace ; that done,
To these a grateful monument shall rise,
With all sepulchral honour — frequent there
We'll offer incense ; — there each weeping muse
Shall grave the tributary verse ; — with tears
Embalm their memories ; and teach mankind,
Howe'er Oppression stalk the groaning earth ;
Yet heav'n, in its own hour, can bring relief ;
Can blast the tyrant in his guilty pride,
And prove the Orphan's guardian to the last.

F I N I S.



T O

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

S I R,

A Letter to you from an English author will carry with it the appearance of corresponding with the enemy, not only as the two nations are at present involved in a difficult and important war, but also because in many of your late writings you seem determined to live in a state of hostility with the British nation. Whenever we come in your way, “ we are ferocious, we are islanders, we are the people whom your country has taught, we fall behind other nations in point of taste and elegance of composition; the same cause that has withheld from us a genius for painting and music, has also deprived us of the true spirit of Tragedy; and, in short, barbarism still prevails among us.”

But, notwithstanding this vein of prejudice, which has discoloured almost all your *fugitive pieces*, there still breathes throughout your writings such a general spirit of Humanity and zeal for the Honour of the Republic of Letters, that I am inclined to imagine the author of the English Orphan of China (an obscure islander) may still address you upon terms of amity and literary benevolence.

As I have attempted a Tragedy upon a subject that has exercised your excellent talents, and thus have dared to try my strength in the Bow of ULYSSES, I hold myself in some sort accountable to M. De VOLTAIRE for the departure I have made from his plan, and the substitution of a new fable of my own.

My first propensity to this story was occasioned by the remarks of an admirable critic* of our own, upon the

* Mr. Hurd, in his Commentary upon Horace.

ORPHAN OF THE HOUSE OF CHAU, preserved to us by the industrious and sensible P. DU HALDE, which, as our learned commentator observes, amidst great wildness and irregularity, has still some traces of resemblance to the beautiful models of antiquity. In my reflections upon this piece, I imagined I saw a blemish in the manner of saving the Orphan, by the tame resignation of another infant in his place; especially when the subject afforded so fair an opportunity of touching the strugglings of a parent, on so trying an occasion. It therefore occurred to me, if a fable could be framed, in which the Father and the two Young Men might be interwoven with probability and perspicuity, and not embarrassed with all the perplexities of a riddle, as, you know, is the case of the HERACLIUS of CORNEILLE, that then many situations might arise, in which some of the nearest affections of the heart might be awakened: but even then I was too conscious that it must be executed by a genius very different from myself.

In this state of mind, sir, I heard with pleasure that M. De VOLTAIRE had produced at Paris his L'ORPHELIN DE LA CHINE: I ardently longed for a perusal of the piece, expecting that such a writer would certainly seize all the striking incidents which might naturally grow out of so pregnant a story, and that he would leave no source of passion unopened. I was in some sort, but not wholly disappointed: I saw M. De VOLTAIRE rushing into the midst of things at once; opening his subject in an alarming manner; and, after the narrative relating to GENGISKAN is over, working up his first act like a poet indeed.

Meum qui pectus inaniter angit

Ut Magus.

In the beginning of the second act, he again touches the passions with a master-hand; but, like a rower who

has put forth all his strength, and suddenly slackens his exertion, I saw, or imagined I saw, him give way all at once; the great tumult of the passions is over; the interest wears away; GENGISKAN talks politics; the tenderness of a mother, flying with all the strong impulses of nature to the relief of her child, is thrown into cold unimpassioned narrative; the *role pour l'amoureux* must have its place, and the rough conqueror of a whole people must instantly become *Le Chevalier* GENGISKAN, as errant a lover as ever sighed in the Thuilleries at Paris. Your own words, sir, strongly expressive of that manly and sensible taste, which distinguishes you throughout Europe, occurred to me upon this occasion: “Quelle
 “ place pour la galanterie que le parricide & l’inceste,
 “ qui désolent une famille, & la contagion qui ravage
 “ un pais? Et quel exemple plus frappant du ridicule
 “ de notre theatre, & du pouvoir de l’habitude, que
 “ Corneille d’un côté, qui fait dire à Thésée.—

“ Quelque ravage affreux qu’étale ici la Peste;

“ L’absence aux vrais amans est encore plus funeste,

“ Et moi, qui, soixante ans apres lui, viens faire parler
 “ une vieille Jocaste d’un viel amour: & tout cela
 “ pour complaire au goût le plus fade & le plus faux qui
 “ ait jamais corrompu la literature.” Indeed, sir, GENGISKAN, in the very moment of overwhelming a whole nation, usurping a crown, and massacring the royal family, except one infant, whom he is in quest of, appeared to me exactly like the amorous CÆDIPUS in the midst of a destructive plague. “Nunc non erat his locus.” —How would that noble performance, that *Chef d’œuvre* of your country, the *ATHALIE* of RACINE, have been defaced by the gallantry of an intrigue, if a tyrant had been introduced to make love to the wife of the high-priest? or if JOAD, entertaining a secret affection for *ATHALIE*, and being asked what orders he

would give relating to the delivery of his country, should answer, "aucune," none at all.—And yet this is the language of a northern conqueror, whining for a mandarin's wife, who has no power of resisting, and having no relation to the royal family, could not, by an intermarriage, strengthen his interest in the crown. But to you, sir, who have told us that Love should reign a very tyrant in Tragedy, or not appear there at all, being unfit for the second place; to you, who have said that NERO should not hide himself behind a tapestry to overhear the conversation of his mistress and his rival, what need I urge these remarks?—To fill up the long career of a tragedy with this episodic love must certainly have been the motive that led you into this error; an error I take the liberty to call it, because I have observed it to be the hackneyed and stale stratagem of many modern writers. Within the compass of my reading, there is hardly a bad man in any play, but he is in love with some very good woman: the scenes that pass between them, I have always remarked, are found dull and unawakening by the audience, even though adorned with all the graces of such composition as yours, of which it is but justice to say, that it bestows embellishments upon every subject.

For me, sir, who only draw in crayons, who have no resource to those lasting colours of imagination with which you set off every thing; a writer such as I am, sir, could not presume to support that duplicity of passion which runs through your piece. I could not pretend, by the powers of style, to suborn an audience in favour of those secondary passages, from which their attention naturally revolts. A plainer and more simple method lay before me. I was necessitated to keep the main object as much as possible before the eye; and therefore it was that I took a survey of my subject, in order to catch at every thing that seemed to me to re-

sult with order and propriety from it. A scantiness of interesting business seemed to me a primary defect in the construction of the French ORPHAN OF CHINA, and that I imagined had its source in the early date of your play. By beginning almost "*gemino ab ovo*," by making the Orphan and the mandarine's son children in their cradles, it appeared to me that you had stripped yourself of two characters, which might be produced in an amiable light, so as to engage the affections of their auditors, not only for themselves, but consequently for those also to whom they should stand in any degree of relation. From this conduct I proposed a further advantage, that of taking off the very obvious resemblance to the ANDROMACHE, which now strikes every body in your plan. This last remark I do not urge against accidental and distant coincidences of sentiment, diction, or fable. Many of the Greek plays, we know, had a family-likeness, such as an ŒDIPUS, an ELECTRA, an IPHIGENIA in TAURIS, in AULIS, a MEROPE, &c. But what is a beauty in RACINE, seems in his great successor to be a blemish. In the former, nothing depends on the life of ASTYANAX but what was very natural, the happiness of the mother: in the latter, the fate of a kingdom is grafted upon the fortunes of an infant; and I ask your own feelings, (for no body knows the human heart better) Whether an audience is likely to take any considerable interest in the destiny of a babe, who, when your Zamti has saved him, cannot produce any change, any revolution in the affairs of China? No, sir; the conquered remain in the same abject state of vassalage, and the preservation of the infant king becomes therefore uninteresting and unimportant. He might die, sir, in cutting his teeth, of the hooping cough, or any of the disorders attendant on that tender age: whereas when the Orphan is grown up to maturity, when he is a moral agent in the piece, when a plan is laid for revenging

himself on the destroyers of his family, it then becomes a more pressing motive in the mandarine's mind; nay, it is almost his duty, in such a case, to sacrifice even his own offspring for the good of his country. In your story, sir, give me leave to say, I do not see what end can be answered by ZAMTI's loyalty: his prospect is at least so distant, that it becomes almost chimerical. And therefore as history warrants an expulsion of the Tartars, as it was not upon the first inroad, but in process of time and experience, that they learned to incorporate themselves with the conquered, I had recourse to my own preconceived notions. Whether I was partially attached to them, or whether my reasonings upon your fable were just, you, sir, and the public, will determine.

You will perceive, sir, in the English Orphan some occasional insertions of sentiment from your elegant performance. To use the expression of the late Mr. DRYDEN, when he talks of BEN JOHNSON's imitation of the ancients, you *will often track me in your snow*. For this I shall make no apology, either to the public or you: none to the public, because they have applauded some strokes for which I am indebted to you; and none certainly to you, because you are well aware I have but followed the example of many admired writers; BOILEAU, CORNEILLE, and RACINE, with you; and in England, MILTON, Mr. ADDISON, and Mr. POPE. It was finely said by you, (I have read the story, and take it upon trust) when it was objected to the celebrated abbè METASTASIO, as a reproach, that he had frequent transfusions of thought from your writings, "Ah! le cher voleur! il m'a bien embelli." This talent of embellishing I do not pretend to; to avail myself of my reading, and to improve my own productions, is all I can pretend to; and that I flatter myself I have done, not only from you, but many of the writers of antiquity. If the authorities I have abovementioned were not sufficient, I could add another very bright example, the

example of M. De VOLTAIRE, whom I have often tracked, to use the same expression again, in the *snow of Shakespear*. The snow of SHAKESPEAR is but a cold expression ; but perhaps it will be more agreeable to you, than a word of greater energy, that should convey a full idea of the astonishing powers of that great man ; for we islanders have remarked of late, that M. DeVoltaire has a particular satisfaction in descanting on the faults of the most wonderful genius that ever existed since HOMER ; insomuch that a very ingenious gentleman of my acquaintance tells me, that whenever you treat the English bard as a drunken savage in your *avant propos*, he always deems it a sure prognostic that your play is the better for him.

If the great scenes of SHAKESPEAR, sir ; if his boundless view of all nature, the lawn, the wilderness, the blasted heath, mountains, and craggy rocks, with thunder and lightening on their brows ; if these cannot strike the imagination of M. De VOLTAIRE, how can I expect that the studied regularity of my little shrubbery should afford him any kind of pleasure ? To drop the metaphor, if the following tragedy does not appear to you a MONSTROUS FARCE, it is all I can reasonably expect. But whatever may be your opinion of it, I must beg that you will not make it the criterion by which you would decide concerning the taste of the English nation, or the present state of literature among us. What you have humbly said of yourself, in order to do honour to your nation, I can assert with truth of the author of the English ORPHAN, that he is one of the worst poets now in this country. It is true, indeed, that the play has been received with uncommon applause ; that so elegant a writer as the author of CREUSA and THE ROMAN FATHER was my critic and my friend ; and that a great deal of very particular honour has been done me by many persons of the

first distinction. But, give me leave to say, they all know the faults of the piece, as well as if it had been discussed by the academy of *Belles Lettres*.—We are a generous nation, sir; and the faintest approaches to merit, always meet here the warmest encouragement. One thing further I will assure you, in case you should discover any traces of barbarism in the style or fable; That if you had been present at the representation, you would have seen a theatrical splendor conducted with a *bienveillance* unknown to the *scene Francoise*; the performance of the two Young Men would have made you regret that they were not in your piece; and, though a weak state of health deprived the play of so fine an actress as Mrs. CIBBER, you would have beheld in MANDANE a figure that would be an ornament to any stage in Europe, and you would have acknowledged that her Acting promises also to be the same: moreover, you would have seen a ZAMTI, whose exquisite powers are capable of adding Pathos and Harmony even to our great SHAKESPEAR, and have already been the chief support of some of your scenes upon the English stage.

Upon the whole, sir, I beg you will not imagine that I have wrote this Tragedy in the fond hope of eclipsing so celebrated a writer as you are: I had an humbler motive, *propter amorem quod te imitari avelo*. Could I do that in any distant degree, it would very amply gratify the ambition of,

Sir, your real admirer,
and most humble servant,

London,
April 30, 1759.

The AUTHOR of
The ORPHAN of CHINA.



D O U G L A S:

A

T R A G E D Y.



(Price One Shilling and Six-pence)

DOUGLAS

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

TRAGEDY

DOUGLAS

THEATRE

TRAGEDY

CONVENT

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

(Price One Shilling and Six-pence)

DOUGLAS

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

DOUGLAS:

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

Non ego sum vates, sed prisca conscius ævi.



L O N D O N :

Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand.

MDCCLVII.

DOUGLAS:

A

TRAGEDY:

As it is acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

Non ego sum vates, sed populi conditor vixi.



L O N D O N :

Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand.

MDCCLVII



PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. SPARKS.

IN antient times, when Britain's trade was arms,
And the lov'd musick of her youth, alarms.
A god-like race sustain'd fair England's fame :
Who has not heard of gallant PIERCY's name ?
Ay, and of DOUGLAS ? Such illustrious fees
In rival Rome and Carthage never rose !
From age to age bright shone the British fire,
And every hero was a hero's fire.
When powerful fate decreed one warrior's doom,
Up sprung the Phoenix from his parent's tomb.
But whilst these generous rivals fought and fell,
These generous rivals lov'd each other well :
Tho' many a bloody field was lost and won,
Nothing in hate, in honour all was done.
When PIERCY wrong'd defy'd his prince or peers,
Fast came the DOUGLAS, with his Scottish spears ;
And, when proud DOUGLAS made his King his foe,
For DOUGLAS, PIERCY bent his English bow.
Expell'd their native homes by adverse fate,
They knock'd alternate at each other's gate :

Then

PROLOGUE

*Then blaz'd the castle, at the midnight hour,
For him whose arms had shook its firmest tower.
This night a DOUGLAS your protection claims ;
A wife ! a mother ! pity's softest names :
The story of her woes indulgent hear,
And grant your suppliant all she begs, a tear.
In confidence she begs ; and hopes to find
Each English breast, like noble PIERCY's kind.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lord RANDOLPH,	Mr. RIDOUT.
GLENALVON,	Mr. SMITH.
NORVAL, DOUGLAS,	Mr. BARRY.
STRANGER,	Mr. SPARKS.
SERVANTS.	

WOMEN.

MATILDA, Lady RAN-	} Mrs. WOFFINGTON.
DOLPH,	
ANNA,	Mrs. VINCENT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ, as represented
at EDINBURGH.

LORD RANDOLPH,

MR. YOUNGER.

GLENALVON,

MR. LOVE.

NORVAL, DOUGLAS,

MR. DIGGS.

STRANGER,

MR. HAYMAN.

SERVANTS, &c.

SERVANTS.

MEMOR

WOMEN.

MATILDA, Lady RANDOLPH, MRS. WARD.

ANNA,

Mrs. WARD.

Mrs. HOPKINS.



DOUGLAS:

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The court of a castle, surrounded with woods.

Enter Lady RANDOLPH.

YE woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom
Accords with my soul's sadness, and draws forth
The voice of sorrow from my bursting heart,
Farewel a while : I will not leave you long ;
For in your shades I deem some spirit dwells,
Who from the chiding stream, or groaning oak,
Still hears, and answers to MATILDA'S moan.
O DOUGLAS ! DOUGLAS ! If departed ghosts

B

Are

Are e'er permitted to review this world,
 Within the circle of that wood thou art,
 And with the passion of immortals hear'st
 My lamentation : hear'st thy wretched wife
 Weep for her husband slain, her infant lost.
 My brother's timeless death I seem to mourn ;
 Who perish'd with thee on this fatal day.
 To thee I lift my voice ; to thee address
 The plaint which mortal ear has never heard.
 O disregard me not ; though I am call'd
 Another's now, my heart is wholly thine.
 Incapable of change, affection lies
 Buried, my DOUGLAS, in thy bloody grave.
 But RANDOLPH comes, whom fate has made my Lord,
 To chide my anguish, and defraud the dead.

Enter Lord RANDOLPH.

Again these weeds of woe ! say, do'st thou well
 To feed a passion which consumes thy life ?
 The living claim some duty ; vainly thou
 Bestow'st thy cares upon the silent dead.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Silent, alas ! is he for whom I mourn :
 Childless, without memorial of his name,
 He only now in my remembrance lives.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Time, that wears out the trace of deepest anguish,
 Has past o'er thee in vain. Wou'd thou wer't not
 Compos'd of grief and tenderness alone !
 Sure thou art not the daughter of Sir MALCOLM :
 Strong was his rage, eternal his resentment :
 For when thy brother fell, he smil'd to hear
 That DOUGLAS' son in the same field was slain.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Oh ! rake not up the ashes of my fathers :
 Implacable resentment was their crime,
 And grievous has the expiation been.

Contending with the DOUGLAS, gallant lives
Of either house were lost; my ancestors
Compell'd, at last, to leave their ancient seat
On Tiviot's pleasant banks; and now, of them
No heir is left. Had they not been so stern,
I had not been the last of all my race.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Thy grief wrests to its purposes my words.
I never ask'd of thee that ardent love,
Which in the breasts of fancy's children burns,
Decent affection, and complacent kindness,
Were all I wish'd for; but I wish'd in vain.
Hence with the less regret my eyes behold
The storm of war that gathers o'er this land:
If I should perish by the Danish sword,
MATILDA would not shed one tear the more.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Thou do'st not think so: woeful as I am
I love thy merit, and esteem thy virtues,
But whither goest thou now?

Lord RANDOLPH.

Straight to the camp,

Where every warrior on the tip-toe stands
Of expectation, and impatient asks
Each who arrives, if he is come to tell
The Danes are landed.

Lady RANDOLPH.

O, may adverse winds,
Far from the coast of Scotland, drive their fleet!
And every foldier of both hosts return
In peace and safety to his pleasant home!

Lord RANDOLPH.

Thou speak'st a woman's, hear a warrior's wish:
Right from their native land, the stormy north,
May the wind blow, till every keel is fix'd

Immoveable in Caledonia's strand !
 Then shall our foes repent their bold invasion,
 And roving armies shun the fatal shore.

Lady RANDOLPH.

War I detest: but war with foreign foes,
 Whose manners, language, and whose looks are strange,
 Is not so horrid, nor to me so hateful,
 As that which with our neighbours oft we wage.
 A river here, there an ideal line
 By fancy drawn, divides the sister kingdoms.
 On each side dwells a people similar,
 As twins are to each other, valiant both,
 Both for their valour famous thro' the world.
 Yet will they not unite their kindred arms,
 And, if they must have war, wage distant war,
 But with each other fight in cruel conflict.
 Gallant in strife, and noble in their ire,
 The battle is their pastime. They go forth
 Gay in the morning, as to summer sport:
 When ev'ning comes, the glory of the morn,
 The youthful warrior, is a clod of clay.
 Thus fall the prime of either hapless land;
 And such the fruit of Scotch and English wars.

Lord RANDOLPH.

I'll hear no more: this melody would make
 A soldier drop his sword, and doff his arms,
 Sit down and weep the conquests he has made;
 Yea, (like a monk), sing rest and peace in heav'n
 To souls of warriors in his battles slain.
 Lady, farewell: I leave thee not alone;
 Yonder comes one whose love makes duty light.

Enter ANNA.

ANNA.

Forgive the rashness of your ANNA's love:
 Urg'd by affection, I have thus presum'd

A T R A G E D Y.

5

To interrupt your solitary thoughts;
And warn you of the hours that you neglect,
And lose in sadness.

Lady RANDOLPH.

So to lose my hours
Is all the use I wish to make of time.

ANNA.

To blame thee, lady, suits not with my state :
But sure I am, since death first prey'd on man,
Never did sister thus a brother mourn.
What had your sorrows been if you had lost,
In early youth, the husband of your heart ?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Oh !

ANNA.

Have I distressed you with officious love,
And ill-tim'd mention of your brother's fate ?
Forgive me, lady : humble tho' I am,
The mind I bear partakes not of my fortune :
So fervently I love you, that to dry
These piteous tears, I'd throw my life away.

Lady RANDOLPH.

What power directed thy unconscious tongue
To speak as thou hast done ? to name —

ANNA.

I know not :

But since my words have made my mistress tremble,
I will speak so no more ; but silent mix
My tears with hers.

Lady RANDOLPH.

No, thou shalt not be silent.
I'll trust thy faithful love, and thou shalt be
Henceforth th' instructed partner of my woes.
But what avails it ? Can thy feeble pity
Roll back the flood of never-ebbing time ?

Compell the earth and ocean to give up
Their dead alive?

ANNA.

What means my noble mistress?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Didst thou not ask what had my sorrows been?—

If I in early youth had lost a husband?—

In the cold bosom of the earth is lodg'd,

Mangl'd with wounds, the husband of my youth;

And in some cavern of the ocean lyes

My child and his. — — —

ANNA.

O! lady, most rever'd!

The tale wrapt up in your amazing words

Deign to unfold.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Alas! an ancient feud,

Hereditary evil, was the source

Of my misfortunes. Ruling fate decreed,

That my brave brother should in battle save

The life of DOUGLAS' son, our house's foe:

The youthful warriors vow'd eternal friendship.

To see the vaunted sister of his friend

Impatient, DOUGLAS to Balarmo came,

Under a borrow'd name.—My heart he gain'd;

Nor did I long refuse the hand he begg'd:

My brother's presence authoriz'd our marriage.

Three weeks, three little weeks, with wings of down,

Had o'er us flown, when my lov'd lord was call'd

To fight his father's battles; and with him,

In spite of all my tears, did MALCOLM go.

Scarce were they gone, when my stern sire was told

That the false stranger was lord DOUGLAS' son.

Frantic with rage, the baron drew his sword

And question'd me. Alone, forsaken, faint,

Kneeling beneath his sword, fault'ring I took

An

An oath equivocal, that I ne'er would
 Wed one of DOUGLAS name. Sincerity
 Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
 Thy onward path ! altho' the earth should gape,
 And from the gulf of hell destruction cry
 To take dissimulation's winding way.

ANNA.

Alas ! how few of woman's fearful kind
 Durst own a truth so hardy !

Lady RANDOLPH.

The first truth

Is easiest to avow. This moral learn,
 This precious moral, from my tragic tale.—
 In a few days the dreadful tidings came
 That DOUGLAS and my brother both were slain.
 My lord ! my life ! my husband !—mighty God !
 What had I done to merit such affliction ?

ANNA.

My dearest lady ! Many a tale of tears
 I've listen'd to ; but never did I hear
 A tale so sad as this.

Lady RANDOLPH.

In the first days

Of my distracting grief, I found myself——
 As women wish to be who love their lords.
 But who durst tell my father ? The good priest
 Who join'd our hands, my brother's antient tutour,
 With his lov'd MALCOLM, in the battle fell :
 They two alone were privy to the marriage.
 On silence and concealment I resolv'd,
 Till time should make my father's fortune mine.
 That very night on which my son was born,
 My nurse, the only confident I had,
 Set out with him to reach her sister's house :
 But nurse, nor infant, have I ever seen,
 Or heard of, ANNA, since that fatal hour.
 My murder'd child !—had thy fond mother fear'd

The loss of thee, she had loud fame defy'd,
 Despis'd her father's rage, her father's grief,
 And wander'd with thee thro' the scorning world.

ANNA.

Not seen, nor heard of ! then perhaps he lives.

Lady RANDOLPH.

No. It was dark December : wind and rain
 Had beat all night. Across the Carron lay
 The destin'd road ; and in it's swelling flood
 My faithful servant perish'd with my child.
 O hapless son ! of a most hapless sire !—
 But they are both at rest ; and I alone
 Dwell in this world of woe, condemn'd to walk,
 Like a guilt-troubl'd ghost, my painful rounds :
 Nor has despiteful fate permitted me
 The comfort of a solitary sorrow.
 Tho' dead to love, I was compell'd to wed
 RANDOLPH, who snatch'd me from a villain's arms ;
 And RANDOLPH now possesses the domains,
 That by Sir MALCOLM's death on me devolv'd ;
 Domains, that should to DOUGLAS' son have giv'n
 A baron's title, and a baron's power.
 Such were my soothing thoughts, while I bewail'd
 The slaughter'd father of a son unborn.
 And when that son came, like a ray from heav'n,
 Which shines and disappears ; alas ! my child !
 How long did thy fond mother grasp the hope
 Of having thee, she knew not how, restor'd.
 Year after year hath worn her hope away ;
 But left still undiminish'd her desire.

ANNA.

The hand, that spins th' uneven thread of life,
 May smooth the length that's yet to come of your's.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Not in this world : I have consider'd well
 It's various evils, and on whom they fall.

Alas !

A T R A G E D Y.

9

Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself?
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe
O! had I died when my lov'd husband fell!
Had some good angel op'd to me the book
Of providence, and let me read my life,
My heart had broke, when I beheld the sum
Of ills, which one by one I have endur'd.

ANNA.

That God, whose ministers good angels are,
Hath sent the book in mercy to mankind.
But we must leave this theme: GLENALVON comes!
I saw him bend on you his thoughtful eyes,
And hitherwards he slowly stalks his way.

Lady RANDOLPH.

I will avoid him. An ungracious person
Is doubly irksome in an hour like this.

ANNA.

Why speaks my lady thus of RANDOLPH's heir?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Because he's not the heir of RANDOLPH's virtues.
Subtle and shrewd, he offers to mankind
An artificial image of himself:
And he with ease can vary to the taste
Of different men, it's features. Self-denied,
And master of his appetites he seems:
But his fierce nature, like a fox chain'd up,
Watches to seize unseen the wish'd-for prey.
Never were vice and virtue pois'd so ill,
As in GLENALVON's unrelenting mind.
Yet is he brave and politic in war,
And stands aloft in these unruly times.
Why I describe him thus I'll tell hereafter:
Stay and detain him till I reach the castle.

[Exit Lady RANDOLPH.]

ANNA.

ANNA.

O happiness! where art thou to be found?
 I see thou dwellest not with birth and beauty,
 Tho' grac'd with grandeur, and in wealth array'd:
 Nor dost thou, it would seem, with virtue dwell;
 Else had this gentle lady miss'd thee not.

Enter GLENALVON.

GLENALVON.

What dost thou muse on, meditating maid?
 Like some entranc'd and visionary seer
 On earth thou stand'st, thy thoughts ascend to heaven.

ANNA.

Wou'd that I were, e'en as thou say'st, a seer,
 To have my doubts by heav'nly vision clear'd!

GLENALVON.

What dost thou doubt of? what hast thou to do
 With subjects intricate? Thy youth, thy beauty,
 Cannot be questioned: think of these good gifts;
 And then thy contemplations will be pleasing.

ANNA.

Let women view yon monument of woe,
 Then boast of beauty: who so fair as she?
 But I must follow: this revolving day
 Awakes the memory of her ancient woes.

*[Exit ANNA.]*GLENALVON *solus.*

So!—Lady RANDOLPH shuns me; by and by
 I'll woo her as the lion wooes his brides.
 The deed's a doing now, that makes me lord
 Of these rich valleys, and a chief of power.
 The season is most apt; my sounding steps
 Will not be heard amidst the din of arms.

RAN-

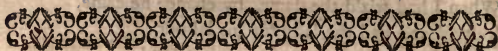
A T R A G E D Y.

41

RANDOLPH has liv'd too long : his better fate
 Had the ascendant once, and kept me down :
 When I had seiz'd the dame, by chance he came,
 Rescu'd and had the lady for his labour ;
 I 'scap'd unknown: a slender consolation !
 Heaven is my witness that I do not love
 To sow in peril, and let others reap
 The jocund harvest. Yet I am not safe:
 By love, or something like it, stung, inflam'd,
 Madly I blabb'd my passion to his wife,
 And she has threaten'd to acquaint him of it.
 The way of woman's will I do not know:
 But well I know the baron's wrath is deadly.
 I will not live in fear : the man I dread
 Is as a Dane to me; ay, and the man
 Who stands betwixt me and my chief desire.
 No bar but he ; she has no kinsman near ;
 No brother in his sister's quarrel bold ;
 And for the righteous cause, a stranger's cause,
 I know no chief that will defy GLENALVON.

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT



ACT II. SCENE I.

A Court, &c.

Enter servants and a stranger at one door, and Lady RANDOLPH and ANNA at another.

Lady RANDOLPH.

WHAT means this clamour? stranger, speak secure;
Hast thou been wrong'd? have these rude men
To vex the weary traveller on his way? [presum'd

First SERVANT.

By us no stranger ever suffer'd wrong;
This man with outcry wild has call'd us forth;
So fore afraid he cannot speak his fears.

Enter Lord RANDOLPH and young man, with their swords drawn and bloody.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Not vain the stranger's fears! how fares my lord?

Lord RANDOLPH.

That it fares well, thanks to this gallant youth,
Whose valour sav'd me from a wretched death!
As down the winding dale I walk'd alone,
At the cross way four armed men attack'd me:
Rovers, I judge, from the licentious camp,
Who would have quickly laid Lord RANDOLPH low,
Had not this brave and generous stranger come,

Like

Like my good angel in the hour of fate,
 And, mocking danger, made my foes his own.
 They turn'd upon him : but his active arm :
 Struck to the ground, from whence they rose no more,
 The fiercest two ; the others fled amain,
 And left him master of the bloody field.
 Speak, Lady RANDOLPH : upon Beauty's tongue
 Dwell accents pleasing to the brave and bold.
 Speak, noble dame, and thank him for thy lord.

Lady RANDOLPH.

My lord, I cannot speak what now I feel.
 My heart o'erflows with gratitude to heav'n,
 And to this noble youth, who all unknown
 To you and yours, deliberated not,
 Nor paus'd at peril, but humanely brave
 Fought on your side, against such fearful odds.
 Have you yet learn'd of him whom we should thank?
 Whom call the saviour of Lord RANDOLPH's life?

Lord RANDOLPH.

I ask'd that question, and he answer'd not :
 But I must know who my deliverer is. *(to the Stranger)*

STRANGER.

A low born man, of parentage obscure,
 Who nought can boast but his desire to be
 A soldier, and to gain a name in arms.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Whoe'er thou art, thy spirit is ennobled.
 By the great King of Kings ! thou art ordain'd
 And stamp'd a hero by the sovereign hand
 Of nature ! blush not, flower of modesty
 As well as valour, to declare thy birth.

STRANGER.

My name is NORVAL : on the Grampian hills
 My father feeds his flocks ; a frugal swain,
 Whose constant cares were to encrease his store,

And

And keep his only son, myself, at home,
 For I had heard of battles, and I long'd
 To follow to the field some warlike lord ;
 And heaven soon granted what my fire denied.
 This moon which rose last night, round as my shield,
 Had not yet fill'd her horns, when, by her light,
 A band of fierce barbarians, from the hills,
 Rush'd like a torrent down upon the vale,
 Sweeping our flocks and herds. The shepherds fled
 For safety, and for succour. I alone, I
 With bended bow, and quiver full of arrows,
 Hover'd about the enemy, and mark'd
 The road he took, then hasted to my friends ;
 Whom, with a troop of fifty chosen men,
 I met advancing. The pursuit I led,
 Till we o'ertook the spoil-encumber'd foe.
 We fought and conquer'd. E're a sword was drawn,
 An arrow from my bow had pierc'd their chief,
 Who wore that day the arms which now I wear.
 Returning home in triumph, I disdain'd
 The shepherd's slothful life ; and having heard
 That our good king had summon'd his bold peers
 To lead their warriors to the Carron side,
 I left my father's house, and took with me
 A chosen servant to conduct my steps :—
 Yon trembling coward who forsook his master.
 Journeying with this intent, I past these towers,
 And, heaven-directed, came this day to do
 The happy deed that gilds my humble name.

Lord RANDOLPH.

He is as wise as brave. Was ever tale
 With such a gallant modesty rehears'd ?
 My brave deliverer ! thou shalt enter now
 A nobler list, and in a monarch's fight
 Contend with princes for the prize of fame.

I will

I will present thee to our Scottish king,
 Whose valiant spirit ever valour lov'd.
 Ha ! my MATILDA ! wherefore starts that tear ?

Lady RANDOLPH.

I cannot say : for various affections,
 And strangely mingled, in my bosom swell ;
 Yet each of them may well command a tear.
 I joy that thou art safe ; and admire
 Him and his fortunes who hath wrought thy safety.
 Obscure and friendless, he the army fought,
 Bent upon peril, in the range of death
 Resolv'd to hunt for fame, and with his sword
 To gain distinction which his birth denied.
 In this attempt unknown he might have perish'd,
 And gain'd, with all his valour, but oblivion.
 Now grac'd by thee, his virtue serves no more
 Beneath despair. The soldier now of hope
 He stands conspicuous ; fame and great renown
 Are brought within the compass of his sword.
 On this my mind reflected, whilst you spoke,
 And bless'd the wonder-working Lord of heaven.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Pious and grateful ever are thy thoughts !
 My deeds shall follow where thou point'st the way.
 Next to myself, and equal to GLENALVON,
 In honour and command shall NORVAL be.

NORVAL.

I know not how to thank you. Rude I am,
 In speech and manners : never till this hour
 Stood I in such a presence : yet, my lord,
 There's something in my breast which makes me bold
 To say, that NORVAL ne'er will shame thy favour.

Lady RANDOLPH.

I will be sworn thou wilt not. Thou shalt be

My

My knight ; and ever, as thou didst to-day,
With happy valour guard the life of RANDOLPH.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Well hast thou spoke. Let me forbid reply. [*To NORVAL.*
We are thy debtors still ; thy high desert
O'ertops our gratitude. I must proceed,
As was at first intended, to the camp.
Some of my train I see are speeding hither,
Impatient, doubtless, of their lord's delay.
Go with me, NORVAL, and thine eyes shall see
The chosen warriors of thy native land,
Who languish for the fight, and beat the air
With brandish'd swords.

NORVAL.

Let us begone, my lord.

Lord RANDOLPH.

[*To Lady RANDOLPH.*

About the time that the declining sun
Shall his broad orbit o'er yon hills suspend,
Expect us to return. This night once more
Within these walls I rest ; my tent I pitch
To-morrow in the field. Prepare the feast.
Free is his heart who for his country fights :
He in the eve of battle may resign
Himself to social pleasure ; sweetest then,
When danger to a soldier's soul endears
The human joy that never may return.

Exeunt RANDOLPH and NORVAL.

S C E N E II.

Lady RANDOLPH and ANNA.

Lady RANDOLPH.

His parting words have struck a fatal truth.
O DOUGLAS ! DOUGLAS ! tender was the time

When we two parted, ne'er to meet again !
 How many years of anguish and despair
 Has heav'n annex'd to those swift passing hours
 Of love and fondness ! Then my bosom's flame
 Oft, as blown back by the rude breath of fear,
 Return'd, and with redoubled ardour blaz'd.

ANNA.

May gracious heav'n pour the sweet balm of peace
 Into the wounds that fester in your breast !
 For earthly consolation cannot cure them.

Lady RANDOLPH.

One only cure can heav'n itself bestow ;—
 A grave—that bed in which the weary rest.
 Wretch that I am ! Alas ! why am I so ?
 At every happy parent I repine !
 How blest the mother of yon gallant NORVAL !
 She for a living husband bore her pains,
 And heard him bless her when a man was born :
 She nurs'd her smiling infant on her breast ;
 Tended the child, and rear'd the pleasing boy :
 She, with affection's triumph, saw the youth
 In grace and comeliness surpass his peers :
 Whilst I to a dead husband bore a son,
 And to the roaring waters gave my child.

ANNA.

Alas ! alas ! why will you thus resume
 Your grief afresh ? I thought that gallant youth
 Would for a while have won you from your woe.
 On him intent you gazed, with a look
 Much more delighted, than your pensive eye
 Has deign'd on other objects to bestow.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Delighted say'st thou ? Oh ! even there mine eye

Found fuel for my life-consuming sorrow.
 I thought, that had the son of DOUGLAS liv'd,
 He might have been like this young gallant stranger,
 And pair'd with him in features and in shape,
 In all endowments, as in years, I deem,
 My boy with blooming NORVAL might have number'd.
 Whilst thus I mus'd, a spark from fancy fell
 On my sad heart, and kindled up a fondness
 For this young stranger, wand'ring from his home;
 And like an orphan cast upon my care.
 I will protect thee, (said I to myself)
 With all my power, and grace with all my favour.

ANNA.

Sure heav'n will blefs so gen'rous a resolve.
 You must, my noble dame, exert your power :
 You must awake : devices will be fram'd,
 And arrows pointed at the breast of NORVAL.

Lady RANDOLPH.

GLENALVON's false and crafty head will work
 Against a rival in his kinsman's love,
 If I deter him not : I only can.
 Bold as he is, GLENALVON will beware
 How he pulls down the fabric that I raise.
 I'll be the artist of young NORVAL's fortune.
 'Tis pleasing to admire ! most apt was I
 To this affection in my better days;
 Though now I seem to you shrunk up, retir'd
 Within the narrow compass of my woe.
 Have you not sometimes seen an early flower
 Open it's bud, and spread it's silken leaves,
 To catch sweet airs, and odours to bestow ;
 Then, by the keen blast nipt, pull in it's leaves,
 And, tho' still living, die to scent and beauty ?

Emblem of me : affliction, like a storm,
Hath kill'd the forward blossom of my heart.

Enter GLENALVON.

GLENALVON.

Where is my dearest kinsman; noble RANDOLPH?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Have you not heard, GLENALVON, of the base——

GLENALVON.

I have : and that the villains may not scape,
With a strong band I have begirt the wood.
If they lurk there, alive they shall be taken,
And torture force from them th' important secret
Whether some foe of RANDOLPH hir'd their swords,
Or if——

Lady RANDOLPH.

That care becomes a kinsman's love.

I have a counsel for GLENALVON's ear. (*Exit ANNA.*)

GLENALVON.

To him your counsels always are commands.

Lady RANDOLPH.

I have not found so : thou art known to me.

GLENALVON.

Known !

Lady RANDOLPH.

And most certain is my cause of knowledge.

GLENALVON.

What do you know? By the most blessed cross,
You much amaze me. No created thing,
Yourself except, durst thus accost GLENALVON.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Is guilt so bold? and dost thou make a merit
Of thy pretended meekness? This to me,
Who, with a gentleness which duty blames,
Have hitherto conceal'd what, if divulg'd,
Would make thee nothing ; or, what's worse than that,

An outcast beggar, and unpitied too:
For mortals shudder at a crime like thine.

GLENALVON.

Thy virtue awes me. First of womankind!
Permit me yet to say, that the fond man
Whom love transports beyond strict virtue's bounds,
If he is brought by love to misery,
In fortune ruin'd, as in mind forlorn,
Unpitied cannot be. Pity's the alms
Which on such beggars freely is bestow'd:
For mortals know that love is still their lord,
And o'er their vain resolves advances still:
As fire, when kindled by our shepherds, moves
Thro' the dry heath before the fanning wind.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Reserve these accents for some other ear.
To love's apology I listen not.
Mark thou my words; for it is meet thou should'st.
His brave deliverer RANDOLPH here retains.
Perhaps his presence may not please thee well:
But, at thy peril, practise ought against him:
Let not thy jealousy attempt to shake
And loosen the good root he has in RANDOLPH;
Whose favourites I know thou hast supplanted.
Thou look'st at me, as if thou fain would'st pry
Into my heart. 'Tis open as my speech.
I give this early caution, and put on
The curb, before thy temper breaks away.
The friendless stranger my protection claims:
His friend I am, and be not thou his foe.

[Exit.

SCENE III.

Manet GLENALVON.

Child that I was, to start at my own shadow,
And be the shallow fool of coward conscience !
I am not what I have been; what I should be.
The darts of destiny have almost pierc'd
My marble heart. Had I one grain of faith
In holy legends, and religious tales,
I should conclude there was an arm above
That fought against me, and malignant turn'd,
To catch my self, the subtle snare I set.
Why, rape and murder are not simple means !
Th' imperfect rape to RANDOLPH gave a spouse ;
And the intended murder introduc'd
A favourite to hide the sun from me ;
And worst of all, a rival. Burning hell !
This were thy center, if I thought she lov'd him !
'Tis certain she contemns me ; nay commands me,
And waves the flag of her displeasure o'er me,
In his behalf. And shall I thus be brav'd ?
Curb'd, as she calls it, by dame chastity ?
Infernal fiends, if any fiends there are
More fierce than love, ambition, and revenge,
Rise up and fill my bosom with your fires
And policy remorseless ! Chance may spoil
A single aim ; but perseverance must
Prosper at last. For chance and fate are words :
Persistent wisdom is the fate of man.
Darkly a project peers upon my mind,
Like the red moon when rising in the east,

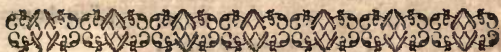
Cross'd and divided by strange-colour'd clouds,
 I'll seek the slave who came with NORVAL hither,
 And for his cowardice was spurned from him.
 I've known a follower's rankled bosom breed
 Venom most fatal to his heedless lord.

[Exit.

End of the SECOND ACT,



ACT



A C T III. S C E N E I.

A Court, &c. as before.

Enter ANNA.

ANNA.

THY vassals, Grief! great nature's order break,
 And change the noon-tide to the midnight hour,
 Whilst Lady RANDOLPH sleeps I will walk forth,
 And taste the air that breathes on yonder bank.
 Sweet may her slumbers be! Ye ministers
 Of gracious heaven who love the human race,
 Angels and seraphs who delight in goodness!
 Forake your skies, and to her couch descend!
 There from her fancy chase those dismal forms
 That haunt her waking; her sad spirit charm
 With images celestial, such as please
 The blest above upon their golden beds.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

One of the vile assassins is secur'd.
 We found the villain lurking in the wood:
 With dreadful imprecations he denies
 All knowledge of the crime. But this is not
 His first essay: these jewels were conceal'd
 In the most secret places of his garment;
 Belike the spoils of some that he has murder'd.

ANNA.

Let me look on them. Ha! here is a heart,
 The chosen crest of DOUGLAS' valiant name!

These are no vulgar jewels. Guard the wretch.

[Exit ANNA.]

Enter servants with a Prisoner.

PRISONER.

I know no more than does the child unborn
Of what you charge me with.

First SERVANT.

You say so, sir!

But torture soon shall make you speak the truth,
Behold the Lady of Lord RANDOLPH comes:
Prepare yourself to meet her just revenge.

SCENE II.

Enter Lady RANDOLPH and ANNA.

ANNA.

Summon your utmost fortitude, before
You speak with him. Your dignity, your fame,
Are now at stake. Think of the fatal secret,
Which in a moment from your lips may fly.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Thou shalt behold me, with a desperate heart,
Hear how my infant perish'd. See he kneels.

[The prisoner kneels.]

PRISONER.

Heav'n blest that countenance, so sweet and mild!
A judge like thee makes innocence more bold.
O save me, lady! from these cruel men,
Who have attack'd and seiz'd me; who accuse
Me of intended murder. As I hope
For mercy at the judgment seat of God,
The tender lamb, that never nipt the grass,
Is not more innocent than I of murder.

Lady

Lady RANDOLPH.

Of this man's guilt what proof can ye produce?

First SERVANT.

We found him lurking in the hollow Glynn.
When view'd and call'd upon, amaz'd, he fled.
We overtook him, and enquir'd from whence
And what he was: he said he came from far,
And was upon his journey to the camp.
Not satisfied with this, we search'd his cloaths,
And found these jewels; whose rich value plead
Most powerfully against him. Hard he seems
And old in villainy. Permit us try
His stubbornness against the torture's force.

PRISONER.

O gentle lady! by your lord's dear life!
Which these weak hands, I swear, did ne'er assail;
And by your children's welfare, spare my age!
Let not the iron tear my ancient joints,
And my grey hairs bring to the grave with pain.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Account for these: thine own they cannot be;
For these, I say: be steadfast to the truth;
Detected falsehood is most certain death.

[ANNA removes the servants and returns.]

PRISONER.

Alas! I'm fore beset! let never man,
For sake of lucre, sin against his soul!
Eternal justice is in this most just!
I, guiltless now, must former guilt reveal.

Lady RANDOLPH.

O! ANNA hear!—once more I charge thee speak
The truth direct: for these to me foretell
And certify a part of thy narration;
With which if the remainder tallies not,
An instant and a dreadful death abides thee.

PRI-

PRISONER.

Then, thus adjur'd, I'll speak to you as just
As if you were the minister of heaven,
Sent down to search the secret sins of men.

Some eighteen years ago, I rented land
Of brave Sir MALCOLM, then BALARMO's lord;
But falling to decay, his servants seiz'd
All that I had, and then turn'd me and mine,
(Four helpless infants and their weeping mother)
Out to the mercy of the winter winds.
A little hovel by the river's side
Receiv'd us : there hard labour, and the skill
In fishing, which was formerly my sport,
Supported life. Whilst thus we poorly liv'd,
One stormy night, as I remember well,
The wind and rain beat hard upon our roof :
Red came the river down, and loud and oft
The angry spirit of the water shriek'd.
At the dead hour of night was heard the cry
Of one in jeopardy. I rose, and ran
To where the circling eddy of a pool
Beneath the ford, us'd oft to bring within
My reach whatever floating thing the stream
Had caught. The voice was ceas'd ; the person lost :
But looking sad and earnest on the waters,
By the moon's light I saw, whirl'd round and round,
A basket : soon I drew it to the bank,
And nestled curious there an infant lay.

LADY RANDOLPH.

Was he alive ?

PRISONER.

He was.

LADY RANDOLPH.

Inhuman that thou art !

How couldst thou kill what waves and tempests spar'd ?

PRI-

PRISONER.

I am not so inhuman.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Didst thou not?

ANNA.

My noble mistress, you are mov'd too much :
This man has not the aspect of stern murder ;
Let him go on, and you, I hope, will hear
Good tidings of your kinsman's long lost child.

PRISONER.

The needy man, who has known better days,
One whom distress has spited at the world,
Is he whom tempting fiends would pitch upon
To do such deeds, as makes the prosperous men
Lift up their hands and wonder who could do them.
And such a man was I ; a man declin'd,
Who saw no end of black adversity :
Yet, for the wealth of kingdoms, I would not
Have touch'd that infant, with a hand of harm.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Ha ! dost thou say so ? Then perhaps he lives !

PRISONER.

Not many days ago he was alive.

Lady RANDOLPH.

O ! God of heav'n ! Did he then die so lately ?

PRISONER.

I did not say he died ; I hope he lives.
Not many days ago these eyes beheld
Him, flourishing in youth, and health, and beauty.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Where is he now ?

PRISONER.

Alas ! I know not where.

Lady

Lady RANDOLPH.

Oh fate ! I fear thee still. Thou riddler, speak
Direct and clear ; else I will search thy soul.

ANNA.

Permit me, ever honour'd ! Keen impatience,
Tho' hard to be restrain'd, defeats itself. —
Pursue thy story with a faithful tongue,
To the last hour that thou didst keep the child.

PRISONER.

Fear not my faith, tho' I must speak my shame.
Within the cradle, where the infant lay,
Was stow'd a mighty store of gold and jewels ;
Tempted by which we did resolve to hide,
From all the world, this wonderful event,
And like a peasant breed the noble child.
That none might mark the change of our estate,
We left the country, travell'd to the north,
Bought flocks and herds, and gradually brought forth
Our secret wealth. But God's all-seeing eye
Beheld our avarice, and smote us fore.
For one by one all our own children died,
And he, the stranger, sole remain'd the heir
Of what indeed was his. Fain then would I,
Who with a father's fondness lov'd the boy,
Have trusted him, now in the dawn of youth,
With his own secret: but my anxious wife,
Foreboding evil, never would consent.
Mean while the stripling grew in years and beauty ;
And, as we oft observ'd, he bore himself,
Not as the offspring of our cottage blood ;
For nature will break out: mild with the mild,
But with the froward he was fierce as fire,
And night and day he talk'd of war and arms.
I set myself against his warlike bent ;
But all in vain : for when a desperate band
Of robbers from the savage mountains came——

Lady

Lady RANDOLPH.

Eternal providence ! What is thy name ?

PRISONER.

My name is NORVAL ; and my name he bears.

Lady RANDOLPH.

'Tis he ; 'tis he himself ! It is my son !

O sovereign mercy ! 'Twas my child I saw !

No wonder, ANNA, that my bosom burn'd.

ANNA.

Just are your transports : ne'er was woman's heart
Prov'd with such fierce extremes. High fated dame !

But yet remember that you are beheld

By servile eyes ; your gestures may be seen

Impassion'd, strange ; perhaps your words o'erheard.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Well dost thou counsel, ANNA : Heaven bestow

On me that wisdom which my state requires !

ANNA.

The moments of deliberation pass,

And soon you must resolve. This useful man

Must be dismiss'd in safety, e'er my lord

Shall with his brave deliverer return.

PRISONER.

If I, amidst astonishment and fear,

Have of your words and gestures rightly judg'd,

Thou art the daughter of my ancient master ;

The child I rescu'd from the flood is thine.

Lady RANDOLPH.

With thee dissimulation now were vain.

I am indeed the daughter of Sir MALCOLM ;

The child thou rescu'dst from the flood is mine

PRISONER.

Blest be the hour that made me a poor man !

My poverty hath sav'd my master's house !

Lady

Lady RANDOLPH.

Thy words surprize me : sure thou dost not feign :
The tear stands in thine eye : such love from thee
Sir MALCOLM's house deserv'd not ; if aright
Thou told'st the story of thy own distress.

PRISONER.

Sir MALCOLM of our barons was the flower ;
The fastest friend, the best and kindest master.
But ah ! he knew not of my sad estate.
After that battle, where his gallant son,
Your own brave brother, fell, the good old lord
Grew desperate and reckless of the world ;
And never, as he erst was wont, went forth
To overlook the conduct of his servants.
By them I was thrust out, and them I blame :
May heaven so judge me as I judg'd my master !
And God so love me as I love his race !

Lady RANDOLPH.

His race shall yet reward thee. On thy faith
Depends the fate of thy lov'd master's house.
Rememb'rest thou a little lonely hut,
That like a holy hermitage appears
Among the cliffs of Carron ?

PRISONER.

I remember

The cottage of the cliffs.

Lady RANDOLPH.

'Tis that I mean :

There dwells a man of venerable age,
Who in my father's service spent his youth :
Tell him I sent thee, and with him remain,
'Till I shall call upon thee to declare,
Before the king and nobles, what thou now

To me hast told. No more but this, and thou
 Shalt live in honour all thy future days;
 Thy son so long shall call thee father still,
 And all the land shall bless the man, who fav'd
 The son of DOUGLAS, and Sir MALCOLM's heir.
 Remember well my words: if thou shouldst meet
 Him whom thou call'st thy son, still call him so;
 And mention nothing of his nobler father.

PRISONER.

Fear not that I shall mar so fair an harvest,
 By putting in my sickle 'ere 'tis ripe.
 Why did I leave my home and ancient dame?
 To find the youth, to tell him all I knew,
 And make him wear these jewels in his arms;
 Which might, I thought, be challeng'd, and so bring
 To light the secret of his noble birth.

[Lady RANDOLPH goes towards the Servants.]

LADY RANDOLPH.

This man is not th'assassin you suspected,
 Tho' chance combin'd some likelyhoods against him.
 He is the faithful bearer of the jewels
 To their right owner, whom in haste he seeks.
 'Tis meet that you should put him on his way,
 Since your mistaken zeal hath dragg'd him hither.

[Exeunt Stranger and Servants.]

S C E N E III.

Lady RANDOLPH and ANNA.

LADY RANDOLPH.

My faithful ANNA! dost thou share my joy?
 I know thou dost. Unparell'd event!
 Reaching from heaven to earth, Jehovah's arm
 Snatch'd from the waves, and brings to me my son!
 Judge of the widow, and the orphan's father!

Accept

Accept a widow's and a mother's thanks
 For such a gift ! What does my ANNA think
 Of the young eaglet of a valiant nest ?
 How soon he gaz'd on bright and burning arms,
 Spurn'd the low dunghill where his fate had thrown him,
 And tower'd up to the region of his fire !

ANNA.

How fondly did your eyes devour the boy !
 Mysterious nature, with the unseen cord
 Of powerful instinct, drew you to your own.

Lady RANDOLPH.

The ready story of his birth believ'd
 Suppress'd my fancy quite ; nor did he owe
 To any likeness my so sudden favour :
 But now I long to see his face again,
 Examine every feature, and find out
 The lineaments of DOUGLAS, or my own.
 But most of all, I long to let him know
 Who his true parents are, to clasp his neck,
 And tell him all the story of his father.

ANNA.

With wary caution you must bear yourself
 In public, lest your tenderness break forth,
 And in observers stir conjectures strange.
 For, if a cherub in the shape of woman
 Should walk this world, yet defamation would,
 Like a vile cur, bark at the angel's train—
 To-day the baron started at your tears.

Lady RANDOLPH.

He did so, ANNA ! well thy mistress knows,
 If the least circumstance, mote of offence,
 Should touch the baron's eye, his sight would be
 With jealousy disorder'd. But the more
 It does behove me instant to declare
 The birth of DOUGLAS, and assert his rights.

This

This night I purpose with my son to meet,
 Reveal the secret and consult with him :
 For wise he is, or my fond judgment errs.
 As he does now, so look'd his noble father,
 Array'd in nature's ease : his mien, his speech,
 Were sweetly simple, and full oft deceiv'd
 Those trivial mortals who seem always wise.
 But, when the matter match'd his mighty mind,
 Uprose the Hero : on his piercing eye
 Sat Observation ; on each glance of thought
 Decision follow'd, as the thunder-bolt
 Pursues the flash.

ANNA.

That demon haunts you still :
 Behold GLENALVON.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Now I shun him not.

This day I brav'd him in behalf of NORVAL ;
 Perhaps too far : at least my nicer fears
 For DOUGLAS thus interpret.

Enter GLENALVON.

GLENALVON.

Noble dame !

The hov'ring Dane at last his men hath landed :
 No band of pirates ; but a mighty host,
 That come to settle where their valour conquers ;
 To win a country, or to lose themselves.

Lady RANDOLPH.

But whence comes this intelligence, GLENALVON ?

GLENALVON.

A nimble courier sent from yonder camp,
 To hasten up the chieftains of the north,
 Inform'd me, as he past, that the fierce Dane
 Had on the eastern coast of Lothian landed,

Near to that place where the sea-rock immense,
Amazing Baf looks o'er a fertile land.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Then must this western army march to join
The warlike troops that guard Edena's tow'rs.

GLENALVON.

Beyond all question. If impairing time
Has not effac'd the image of a place,
Once perfect in my breast, there is a wild
Which lyes to westward of that mighty rock,
And seems by nature formed for the camp
Of water-wasted armies, whose chief strength
Lies in firm foot, unflank'd with warlike horse:
If martial skill directs the Danish lords,
There inaccessible their army lies
To our swift scow'ring horse, the bloody field
Must man to man, and foot to foot, be fought.

Lady RANDOLPH.

How many mothers shall bewail their sons!
How many widows weep their husbands slain!
Ye dames of Denmark! ev'n for you I feel,
Who, sadly sitting on the sea-beat shore,
Long look for lords that never shall return.

GLENALVON.

Oft has th'unconquer'd Caledonian sword
Widow'd the north. The children of the slain
Come, as I hope, to meet their fathers' fate.
The monster war, with her infernal brood,
Loud yelling fury, and life-ending pain,
Are objects suited to GLENALVON's soul.
Scorn is more grievous than the pains of death;
Reproach, more piercing than the pointed sword.

Lady RANDOLPH.

I scorn thee not, but when I ought to scorn;

Nor

Nor e'er reproach, but when insulted virtue
 Against audacious vice asserts herself.
 I own thy worth, GLENALVON; none more apt
 Than I to praise thine eminence in arms,
 And be the echo of thy martial fame.
 No longer vainly feed a guilty passion:
 Go and pursue a lawful mistress, glory.
 Upon the Danish crests redeem thy fault,
 And let thy valour be the shield of RANDOLPH.

GLENALVON.

One instant stay, and hear an alter'd man.
 When beauty pleads for virtue, vice abash'd
 Flies it's own colours, and goes o'er to virtue.
 I am your convert; time will shew how truly:
 Yet one immediate proof I mean to give.
 That youth for whom your ardent zeal to-day,
 Somewhat too haughtily, defy'd your slave,
 Amidst the shock of armies I'll defend,
 And turn death from him, with a guardian arm.
 Sedate by use, my bosom maddens not
 At the tumultuous uproar of the field.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Act thus, GLENALVON, and I am thy friend:
 But that's thy least reward. Believe me, sir,
 The truly generous is the truly wise;
 And he who loves not others, lives unblest.

Exit Lady RANDOLPH.

GLENALVON *solus.*

Amen! and virtue is it's own reward! —
 I think that I have hit the very tone
 In which she loves to speak. Honey'd assent
 How pleasing art thou to the taste of man,
 And woman also! flattery direct
 Rarely disgusts. They little know mankind
 Who doubt it's operation: 'tis my key,

And opes the wicket of the human heart,
 How far I have succeeded now I know not.
 Yet I incline to think her stormy virtue
 Is lull'd awhile: 'tis her alone I fear:
 Whilst she and RANDOLPH live, and live in faith
 And amity, uncertain is my tenure.
 Fate o'er my head suspends disgrace and death,
 By that weak hair, a peevish female's will.
 I am not idle: but the ebbs and flows
 Of fortune's tide cannot be calculated.
 That slave of NORVAL's I have found most apt
 I shew'd him gold, and he has pawn'd his soul
 To say and swear whatever I suggest.
 NORVAL, I'm told, has that alluring look,
 'Twixt man and woman, which I have observ'd
 To charm the nicer and fantastick dames,
 Who are, like lady RANDOLPH, full of virtue.
 In raising RANDOLPH's jealousy I may
 But point him to the truth. He seldom errs
 Who thinks the worst he can of womankind.

The End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT



A C T IV. S C E N E I.

Flourish of Trumpets:

Enter Lord RANDOLPH attended.

Lord RANDOLPH.

SUMMON an hundred horse, by break of day,
To wait our pleasure at the castle gate.

Enter Lady RANDOLPH.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Alas! my lord! I've heard unwelcome News;
The Danes are landed.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Ay, no inroad this
Of the Northumbrian bent to take a spoil:
No sportive war, no tournament essay,
Of some young knight resolv'd to break a spear,
And stain with hostile blood his maiden arms.
The Danes are landed: we must beat them back,
Or live the slaves of Denmark.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Dreadful times!

Lord RANDOLPH.

The fenceless villages are all forsaken;
The trembling mothers, and their children lodg'd
In well-girt towers and castles; whilst the men

Retire indignant. Yet, like broken waves,
They but retire more awful to return.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Immense, as fame reports, the Danish host !

Lord RANDOLPH.

Were it as numerous as loud fame reports,
An army knit like ours wou'd pierce it thro' :
Brothers, that shrink not from each others side,
And fond companions, fill our warlike files:
For his dear offspring, and the wife he loves,
The husband, and the fearless father arm.
In vulgar breasts heroic ardor burns,
And the poor peasant mates his daring lord.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Men's minds are temper'd, like their swords, for war ;
Lovers of danger, on destruction's brink
They joy to rear erect their daring forms.
Hence, early graves ; hence the lone widow's life ;
And the sad mother's grief-embitter'd age.
Where is our gallant guest ?

Lord RANDOLPH.

Down in the vale

I left him, managing a fiery steed,
Whose stubbornness had foil'd the strength and skill
Of every rider. But behold he comes,
In earnest conversation with GLENALVON.

Enter NORVAL and GLENALVON.

GLENALVON ! with the lark arise ; go forth,
And lead my troops that ly in yonder vale :
Private I travel to the royal camp :
NORVAL, thou goest with me. But say young man !
Where didst thou learn so to discourse of war,
And in such terms, as I o'erheard to day ?
War is no village science, nor it's phrase

A language taught amongst the shepherd swains.

NORVAL.

Small is the skill my lord delights to praise
 In him he favours.—Hear from whence it came.
 Beneath a mountain's brow, the most remote
 And inaccessible by shepherds trod,
 In a deep cave, dug by no mortal hand,
 A hermit liv'd; a melancholy man,
 Who was the wonder of our wand'ring swains.
 Austere and lonely, cruel to himself,
 Did they report him; the cold earth his bed,
 Water his drink, his food the shepherd's alms.
 I went to see him, and my heart was touch'd
 With reverence and pity. Mild he spake,
 And, entring on discourse, such stories told
 As made me oft revisit his sad cell.
 For he had been a soldier in his youth;
 And fought in famous battles, when the peers
 Of Europe, by the bold GODFREDO led,
 Against th' usurping Infidel display'd
 The cross of Christ, and won the Holy Land.
 Pleas'd with my admiration, and the fire
 His speech struck from me, the old man wou'd shake
 His years away, and act his young encounters:
 Then, having shew'd his wounds, he'd sit him down,
 And all the live-long day discourse of war.
 To help my fancy, in the smooth green turf
 He cut the figures of the marshall'd hosts;
 Describ'd the motions, and explain'd the use
 Of the deep column, and the lengthen'd line,
 The square, the crescent, and the phalanx firm.
 For all that Saracen, or Christian knew
 Of war's vast art, was to this hermit known.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Why did this soldier in a desert hide

Those qualities, that shou'd have grac'd a camp?

NORVAL.

That too at last I learn'd. Unhappy man!
Returning homewards by Messina's port,
Loaded with wealth and honours bravely won,
A rude and boist'rous captain of the sea
Fasten'd a quarrel on him. Fierce they fought:
The stranger fell, and with his dying breath
Declar'd his name and lineage. Mighty God!
The soldier cried, my brother! Oh! my brother!

Lady RANDOLPH.

His brother!

NORVAL.

Yes; of the same parents born;
His only brother. They exchang'd forgiveness:
And happy, in my mind, was he that died:
For many deaths has the survivor suffer'd.
In the wild desert on a rock he sits,
Or on some nameless stream's untrodden banks,
And ruminates all day his dreadful fate.
At times, alas! not in his perfect mind!
Holds dialogues with his lov'd brother's ghost;
And oft each night forsakes his fullen couch,
To make sad orisons for him he slew.

Lady RANDOLPH.

To what mysterious woes are mortals born!
In this dire tragedy were there no more
Unhappy persons? did the parents live?

NORVAL.

No; they were dead: kind heav'n had clos'd their eyes
Before their son had shed his brother's blood.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Hard is his fate; for he was not to blame!
There is a destiny in this strange world,

Which

Which oft decrees an undeserved doom :

Let schoolmen tell us why. --- From whence these sounds ?

[*Trumpets at a distance.*]

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

My Lord, the trumpets of the troops of Lorn :

The valiant leader hails the noble RANDOLPH.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Mine ancient guest ! does he the warriors lead ?

Has Denmark rous'd the brave old knight to arms ?

OFFICER.

No ; worn with warfare, he resigns the sword.

His eldest hope, the valiant John of Lorn,

Now leads his kindred bands.

Lord RANDOLPH.

GLENALVON, go.

With hospitality's most strong request

Entreat the chief.

[*Exit GLENALVON.*]

OFFICER.

My lord, requests are vain.

He urges on, impatient of delay,

Stung with the tidings of the foe's approach.

Lord RANDOLPH.

May victory sit on the warrior's plume !

Bravest of men ! his flocks and herds are safe ;

Remote from wars alarms his pastures lye,

By mountains inaccessible secur'd :

Yet foremost he into the plain descends,

Eager to bleed in battles not his own.

Such were the heroes of the ancient world :

Contemners they of indolence and gain ;

But still for love of glory, and of arms,

Prone to encounter peril, and to lift
Against each strong antagonist the spear.
I'll go and press the hero to my breast.

[Exit RANDOLPH.]

Manet Lady RANDOLPH and NORVAL.

Lady RANDOLPH.

The soldier's loftiness, the pride and pomp
Investing awful war, NORVAL, I see,
Transport thy youthful mind.

NORVAL.

Ah ! should they not ?

Blest be the hour I left my father's house !
I might have been a shepherd all my days,
And stole obscurely to a peasant's grave.
Now, if I live, with mighty chiefs I stand ;
And, if I fall, with noble dust I lye.

Lady RANDOLPH.

There is a gen'rous spirit in thy breast,
That could have well sustain'd a prouder fortune.
This way with me ; under yon spreading beech,
Unseen, unheard, by human eye or ear,
I will amaze thee with a wond'rous tale.

NORVAL.

Let there be danger lady with the secret,
That I may hug it to my grateful heart,
And prove my faith. Command my sword, my life :
These are the sole possessions of poor NORVAL.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Know'st thou these gems ?

NORVAL.

Durst I believe mine eyes
I'd say I knew them, and they were my father's.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Thy father's say'st thou ! ah ! they were thy father's !

NORVAL.

NORVAL.

I saw them once, and curiously enquir'd
Of both my parents whence such splendor came?
But I was check'd, and more could never learn.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Then learn of me, thou art not NORVAL's son.

NORVAL.

Not NORVAL's son!

Lady RANDOLPH.

Nor of a shepherd sprung.

NORVAL.

Lady, who am I then?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Noble thou art;

For noble was thy fire!

NORVAL.

I will believe ——

O! tell me farther! Say who was my father?

Lady RANDOLPH.

DOUGLAS!

NORVAL.

Lord DOUGLAS, whom to day I saw?

Lady RANDOLPH.

His younger brother.

NORVAL.

And in yonder camp?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Alas!

NORVAL.

You make me tremble — Sighs and tears!
Lives my brave father?

Lady

Lady RANDOLPH.

Ah! too brave indeed!

He fell in battle e're thyself was born.

NORVAL.

Ah me unhappy! e're I saw the light?

But does my mother live? I may conclude,

From my own fate, her portion has been sorrow.

Lady RANDOLPH.

She lives; but wastes her life in constant woe,

Weeping her husband slain, her infant lost.

NORVAL.

You that are skill'd so well in the sad story

Of my unhappy parents, and with tears

Bewail their destiny, now have compassion

Upon the offspring of the friends you lov'd.

O! tell me who, and where my mother is!

Opprest by a base world, perhaps she bends

Beneath the weight of other ills than grief;

And desolate, implores of heav'n, the aid

Her son should give. It is, it must be so —

Your countenance confesses that she's wretched.

O! tell me her condition! Can the sword —

Who shall resist me in a parent's cause?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Thy virtue ends her woe. — My son, my son!

I am thy mother, and the wife of DOUGLAS!

[Falls upon his neck.

NORVAL.

O heav'n and earth, how wond'rous is my fate!

Art thou my mother? Ever let me kneel!

Lady

Lady RANDOLPH.

Image of DOUGLAS! Fruit of fatal love!
All that I owe thy fire I pay to thee.

NORVAL.

Respect and admiration still possess me,
Checking the love and fondness of a son.

Yet I was filial to my humble parents.

But did my fire surpass the rest of men,
As thou excellest all of womankind?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Arise, my son! In me thou dost behold
The poor remains of beauty once admir'd:

The autumn of my days is come already;
For sorrow made my summer haste away.

Yet in my prime I equal'd not thy father:
His eyes were like the eagle's, yet sometimes

Liker the dove's; and, as he pleas'd, he won
All hearts with softness, or with spirit aw'd.

NORVAL.

How did he fall? Sure 'twas a bloody field
When DOUGLAS died: O I have much to ask!

Lady RANDOLPH.

Hereafter thou shalt hear the lengthen'd tale
Of all thy father's and thy mother's woes.

At present this: Thou art the rightful heir
Of yonder castle, and the wide domains

Which now Lord RANDOLPH, as my husband, holds.
But thou shalt not be wrong'd; I have the power

To right thee still: Before the king I'll kneel,
And call Lord DOUGLAS to protect his blood.

NORVAL.

The blood of DOUGLAS will protect itself.

Lady RANDOLPH.

But we shall need both friends and favour, boy,
To wrest thy lands and lordship from the gripe
Of RANDOLPH and his kinsman. Yet I think
My tale will move each gentle heart to pity,
My life incline the virtuous to believe.

NORVAL.

To be the son of DOUGLAS is to me
Inheritance enough. Declare my birth,
And in the field I'll seek for fame and fortune.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Thou dost not know what perils and injustice
Await the poor man's valour. O! my son!
The noblest blood in all the land's abash'd,
Having no lacquey but pale poverty.
Too long hast thou been thus attended, DOUGLAS!
Too long hast thou been deem'd a peasant's child.
The wanton heir of some inglorious chief
Perhaps has scorn'd thee, in the youthful sports;
Whilst thy indignant spirit swell'd in vain!
Such contumely thou no more shalt bear:
But how I purpose to redress thy wrongs
Must be hereafter told. Prudence directs
That we should part before yon chiefs return.
Retire, and from thy rustick follower's hand
Receive a billet, which thy mother's care,
Anxious to see thee, dictated before
This casual opportunity arose
Of private conference. It's purport mark;
For as I there appoint we meet again,
Leave me, my son! and frame thy manners still
To NORVAL's, not to noble DOUGLAS' state.

NORVAL.

I will remember. Where is NORVAL now?
That good old man.

A TRAGEDY.

47

Lady RANDOLPH.

At hand conceal'd he lies,
An useful witness. But beware, my son,
Of yon GLENALVON; in his guilty breast
Resides a villain's shrewdness, ever prone
To false conjecture. He hath griev'd my heart.

NARVOL.

Has he indeed? Then let yon false GLENALVON
Beware of me.

[Exit DOUGLAS.

Manet Lady RANDOLPH.

There burst the smother'd flame!

O! thou all righteous and eternal King!
Who father of the fatherless art call'd,
Protect my son! — Thy inspiration, Lord!
Hath fill'd his bosom with that sacred fire,
Which in the breasts of his forefathers burn'd:
Set him on high like them, that he may shine
The star and glory of his native land!
Then let the minister of death descend,
And bear my willing spirit to it's place.
Yonder they come. How do bad women find
Unchanging aspects to conceal their guilt?
When I by reason, and by justice urg'd,
Full hardly can dissemble with these men
In nature's pious cause.

Enter Lord RANDOLPH and GLENALVON.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Yon gallant chief,
Of arms enamour'd, all repose disclaims.

Lady

Lady RANDOLPH.

Be not, my Lord, by his example sway'd :
 Arrange the business of to-morrow now,
 And, when you enter, speak of war no more.

[Exit Lady RANDOLPH.]

Manent Lord RANDOLPH and GLENALVON.

Lord RANDOLPH.

'Tis so by heav'n ! her mien, her voice, her eye,
 And her impatience to be gone, confirm it.

GLENALVON.

He parted from her now : Behind the mount,
 Amongst the trees, I saw him glide along.

Lord RANDOLPH.

For sad, sequester'd virtue she's renown'd !

GLENALVON. ———

Most true, my Lord.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Yet this distinguish'd dame
 Invites a youth, the acquaintance of a day,
 Alone to meet her at the midnight hour,
 This assignation, (*shows a letter*) the assassin freed,
 Her manifest affection for the youth,
 Might breed suspicion in a husband's brain,
 Whose gentle consort all for love had wedded :
 Much more in mine. MATILDA never lov'd me.
 Let no man, after me, a woman wed,
 Whose heart he knows he has not ; tho' she brings
 A mine of gold, a kingdom for her dowry,
 For let her seem, like the night's shadowy queen,
 Cold and contemplative ; — He cannot trust her :
 She may, she will, bring shame and sorrow on him ;
 The worst of sorrow, and the worst of shame !

GLE-

GLENALVON.

Yield not, my Lord, to such afflicting thoughts;
 But let the spirit of an husband sleep,
 'Till your own senses make a sure conclusion.
 This billet must to blooming NORVAL go:
 At the next turn awaits my trusty spy;
 I'll give it him refitted for his master.
 In the close thicket take your secret stand;
 The moon shines bright, and your own eyes may judge
 Of their behaviour.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Thou dost counsel well.

GLENALVON.

Permit me now to make one slight essay.
 Of all the trophies which vain mortal's boast,
 By wit, by valour, or by wisdom won,
 The first and fairest, in a young mans eye,
 Is woman's captive heart. Successful love
 With glorious fumes intoxicates the mind;
 And the proud conqueror in triumph moves
 Air-born, exalted above vulgar men.

Lord RANDOLPH.

And what avails this maxim?

GLENALVON.

Much, my lord!

Withdraw a little: I'll accost young NORVAL,
 And with ironical derisive counsel
 Explore his spirit. If he is no more
 Than humble NORVAL, by thy favour rais'd,
 Brave as he is, he'll shrink astonish'd from me:
 But if he be the favourite of the fair,
 Lov'd by the first of Caledonia's dames,
 He'll turn upon me, as the lion turns
 Upon the hunter's spear.

Lord RANDOLPH.

'Tis shrewdly thought.

GLENALVON.

When we grow loud, draw near. But let my Lord
His rising wrath restrain.

[Exit RANDOLPH.]

Manet GLENALVON.

'Tis strange by heav'n !
That she should run full tilt her fond career,
To one so little known. She too that seem'd
Pure as the winter stream, when ice emboss'd
Whitens it's course. Even I did think her chaste,
Whose charity exceeds not. Precious sex !
Whose deeds lascivious pass GLENALVON's thoughts !

NORVAL *appears*.

His port I love ; he's in a proper mood
To chide the thunder, if at him it roar'd.
Has NORVAL seen the troops ?

NORVAL.

The setting sun,
With yellow radiance lighten'd all the vale,
And as the warriors mov'd, each polish'd helm,
Corset, or spear, glanc'd back his gilded beams.
The hill they climb'd, and halting at it's top,
Of more than mortal size, tow'ring, they seem'd,
An host angelic, clad in burning arms.

GLENALVON.

Thou talk'st it well ; no leader of our host,
In sounds more lofty, speaks of glorious war.

NORVAL.

If I shall e'er acquire a leader's name,
My speech will be less ardent. Novelty
Now prompts my tongue, and youthful admiration
Vents itself freely ; since no part is mine
Of praise, pertaining to the great in arms.

GLEN

GLENALVON.

You wrong yourself, brave sir ; your martial deeds
 Have rank'd you with the great : but mark me NORVAL ;
 Lord RANDOLPH's favour now exalts your youth
 Above his veterans of famous service.
 Let me, who know these soldiers, counsel you.
 Give them all honour ; seem not to command ;
 Else they will scarcely brook your late sprung power,
 Which nor alliance props, nor birth adorns.

NORVAL.

Sir, I have been accusom'd all my days
 To hear and speak the plain and simple truth :
 And tho' I have been told, that there are men
 Who borrow friendship's tongue to speak their scorn,
 Yet in such language I am little skill'd.
 Therefore I thank GLENALVON for his counsel,
 Altho' it sounded harshly. Why remind
 Me of my birth obscure ? Why slur my power
 With such contemptuous terms ?

GLENALVON.

I did not mean
 To gall your pride, which now I see is great.

NORVAL.

My pride !

GLENALVON.

Suppress it as you wish to prosper.
 Your pride's excessive. Yet for RANDOLPH's sake
 I will not leave you to it's rash direction.
 If thus you swell, and frown at high-born men,
 Will high-born men endure a shepherd's scorn ?

NORVAL.

A shepherd's scorn!

GLENALVON.

Yes; if you presume

To bend on soldiers these disdainful eyes,
As if you took the measure of their minds,
And said in secret, you're no match for me;
What will become of you?

NORVAL.

If this were told! —

[*Aside*]

Ha! dost thou have fears for thy presumptuous self!

GLENALVON.

Ha! Dost thou threaten me?

NORVAL.

Didst thou not hear?

GLENALVON.

Unwillingly I did; a nobler foe
Had not been question'd thus. But such as thee —

NORVAL.

Whom dost thou think me?

GLENALVON.

Norval.

NORVAL.

So I am —

And who is NORVAL in GLENALVON's eyes?

GLENALVON.

A peasant's son, a wandering beggar-boy;
At best no more, even if he speaks the truth.

NORVAL.

False as thou art, dost thou suspect my truth?

GLENALVON.

Thy truth ! thou'rt all a lye ; and false as hell
Is the vain-glorious tale thou told'st to RANDOLPH.

NORVAL.

If I were chain'd, unarm'd, and bedrid old,
Perhaps I should revile : But as I am
I have no tongue to rail. The humble NORVAL
Is of a race, who strive not but with deeds.
Did I not fear to freeze thy shallow valour,
And make thee sink too soon beneath my sword,
I'd tell thee—what thou art. I know thee well.

GLENALVON.

Dost thou not know GLENALVON, born to command
Ten thousand slaves like thee ?

NORVAL.

Villain, no more :

Draw and defend thy life. I did design
To have defy'd thee in another cause :
But heaven accelerates it s vengeance on thee.
Now for my own and Lady RANDOLPH's wrongs.

Enter Lord RANDOLPH.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Hold, I command you both. The man that stirs
Makes me his foe.

NORVAL.

Another voice than thine

That threat had vainly founded, noble RANDOLPH.

GLENALVON.

Hear him, my lord ; he's wond'rous condescending !
Mark the humility of shepherd NORVAL !

NORVAL.

Now you may scoff in safety.

(Sheaths his sword.)

Lord RANDOLPH.

Speak not thus,
Taunting each other; but unfold to me
The cause of quarrel, then I judge betwixt you,

NORVAL.

Nay, my good lord, tho' I revere you much,
My cause I plead not, nor demand your judgment.
I blush to speak; I will not, cannot speak
Th' opprobrious words that I from him have borne
To the liege-lord of my dear native land
I owe a subject's homage: but ev'n him
And his high arbitration I'd reject.
Within my bosom reigns another lord;
Honour, sole judge and umpire of itself.
If my free speech offend you, noble RANDOLPH,
Revoke your favours, and let NORVAL go
Hence as he came, alone, but not dishonour'd.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Thus far I'll mediate with impartial voice:
The ancient foe of Caledonia's land
Now waves his banners o'er her frightened fields.
Suspend your purpose, 'till your country's arms
Repel the bold invader: then decide
The private quarrel.

GLENALVON.

I agree to this.

NORVAL.

And I,

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT,

The banquet waits.

Lord RANDOLPH.

We come.

[Exit RANDOLPH.]

GLENALVON.

Norval,

Let

Let not our variance mar the social hour,
 Nor wrong the hospitality of RANDOLPH.
 Nor frowning anger, nor yet wrinkl'd hate,
 Shall stain my countenance. Smooth thou thy brow;
 Nor let our strife disturb the gentle dame.

NORVAL.

Think not so lightly, Sir, of my resentment:
 When we contend again, our strife is mortal.

End of the Fourth Act.



E 4

ACT



ACT V. SCENE I.

The Wood.

Enter DOUGLAS.

THIS is the place the centre of the grove.
 Here stands the oak, the monarch of the wood.
 How sweet and solemn is this mid-night scene !
 The silver moon, unclouded, holds her way
 Thro' skies where I could count each little star.
 The fanning west wind scarcely stirs the leaves ;
 The river, rushing o'er its pebbled bed,
 Imposes silence with a stillly sound.
 In such a place as this at such an hour,
 If ancestry can be in ought believ'd,
 Descending spirits have convers'd with man,
 And told the secrets of the world unknown.

Enter Old NORVAL.

Old NORVAL.

'Tis he. But what if he should chide me hence ?
 His just reproach I fear.

[DOUGLAS turns and sees him.

Forgive, forgive,

Can'st thou forgive the man, the selfish man,
 Who bred Sir MALCOLM's heir a shepherd's son.

DOUGLAS.

Kneel not to me : thou art my father still :
 Thy wish'd-for presence now compleats my joy.

Welcome

Welcome to me, my fortunes thou shalt share,
And ever honour'd with thy DOUGLAS live.

Old NORVAL.

And do'st thou call me father? O my son!
I think that I could die to make amends
For the great wrong I did thee. 'Twas my crime
Which in the wilderness so long conceal'd
The blossom of thy youth.

DOUGLAS.

Not worse the fruit,
That in the wilderness the blossom blow'd.
Amongst the shepherds, in the humble cote,
I learn'd some lessons, which I'll not forget
When I inhabit yonder lofty towers.
I, who was once a swain, will ever prove
The poor man's friend; and, when my vassals bow,
NORVAL shall smooth the crested pride of DOUGLAS.

NORVAL.

Let me but live to see thine exaltation!
Yet grievous are my fears. O leave this place,
And those unfriendly towers.

DOUGLAS.

Why should I leave them?

NORVAL.

Lord RANDOLPH and his kinsman seek your life.

DOUGLAS.

How know'st thou that?

NORVAL.

I will inform you how.

When evening came, I left the secret place
Appointed for me by your mother's care,
And fondly trod in each accustom'd path
That to the castle leads. Whilst thus I rang'd,
I was alarm'd with unexpected sounds

Of

Of earnest voices. On the persons came:
 Unseen I lurk'd, and overheard them name
 Each other as they talk'd, lord RANDOLPH this,
 And that GLENALVON: still of you they spoke,
 And of the lady: threatening was their speech,
 Tho' but imperfectly my ear could hear it.
 'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discov'ry;
 And ever and anon they vow'd revenge.

DOUGLAS.

Revenge! for what?

NORVAL.

For being what you are;
 Sir MALCOLM's heir: how else have you offended?
 When they were gone, I hied me to my cottage,
 And there sat musing how I best might find
 Means to inform you of their wicked purpose.
 But I could think of none: at last perplex'd
 I issued forth, encompassing the tower
 With many a weary step and wishful look.
 Now providence hath brought you to my sight,
 Let not your too courageous spirit scorn
 The caution which I give.

DOUGLAS.

I scorn it not.

My mother warn'd me of GLENALVON's baseness:
 But I will not suspect the noble RANDOLPH.
 In our encounter with the vile assassins,
 I mark'd his brave demeanor: him I'll trust.

NORVAL.

I fear you will too far.

DOUGLAS.

Here in this place
 I wait my mother's coming: she shall know
 What thou hast told: her counsel I will follow:

And

And cautious ever are a mother's counsels.
 You must depart; your presence may prevent
 Our interview.

NORVAL.

My blessing rest upon thee!

O may heav'n's hand, which fav'd thee from the wave,
 And from the sword of foes, be near thee still;
 Turning mischance, if ought hangs o'er thy head,
 All upon mine!

[Exit Old NORVAL.]

DOUGLAS.

He loves me like a parent;
 And must not, shall not lose the son he loves,
 Altho' his son has found a nobler father.
 Eventful day! how hast thou chang'd my state!
 Once on the cold, and winter shaded side
 Of a bleak hill, mischance had rooted me,
 Never to thrive, child of another soil:
 Transplanted now to the gay sunny vale,
 Like the green thorn of May my fortune flowers.
 Ye glorious stars! high heav'n's resplendent host!
 To whom I oft have of my lot complain'd,
 Hear and record my soul's unalter'd wish!
 Dead or alive, let me but be renown'd!
 May heav'n inspire some fierce gigantic Dane,
 To give a bold defiance to our host!
 Before he speaks it out I will accept;
 Like DOUGLAS conquer, or like DOUGLAS die.

Enter Lady RANDOLPH.

Lady RANDOLPH.

My son! I heard a voice——

DOUGLAS,

——The voice was mine.

Lady

Lady RANDOLPH.

Didst thou complain aloud to nature's ear,
That thus in dusky shades, at mid-night hours,
By stealth the mother and the son should meet?

[Embracing him.]

DOUGLAS.

No; on this happy day, this better birth-day,
My thoughts and words are all of hope and joy.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Sad fear and melancholy still divide
The empire of my breast with hope and joy.
Now hear what I advise.

DOUGLAS.

First, let me tell
What may the tenor of your counsel change.

Lady RANDOLPH.

My heart forebodes some evil!

DOUGLAS.

'Tis not good. —

At eve, unseen by RANDOLPH and GLENALVON,
The good old NORVAL in the grove o'er heard
Their conversation: oft they mention'd me
With dreadful threatnings; you they sometimes nam'd:
'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discov'ry;
And ever and anon they vow'd revenge.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Defend us gracious God! we are betray'd:
They have found out the secret of thy birth;
It must be so. That is the great discovery.
Sir MALCOLM's heir is come to claim his own;
And they will be reveng'd. Perhaps even now,
Arm'd and prepar'd for murder, they but wait
A darker and more silent hour, to break

Into

Into the chamber where they think thou sleep'st.
This moment, this, heav'n hath ordain'd to save thee!
Fly to the camp, my son!

DOUGLAS.

And leave you here?

No: to the castle let us go together,
Call up the ancient servants of your house,
Who in their youth did eat your father's bread.
Then tell them loudly that I am your son.
If in the breasts of men one spark remains
Of sacred love, fidelity, or pity,
Some in your cause will arm. I ask but few
To drive those spoilers from my father's house.

Lady RANDOLPH.

O nature, nature! what can check thy force?
Thou genuine offspring of the daring DOUGLAS!
But rush not on destruction: save thyself,
And I am safe To me they mean no harm.
Thy stay but risks thy precious life in vain.
That winding path conducts thee to the river.
Cross where thou seest a broad and beaten way,
Which running eastward leads thee to the camp.
Instant demand admittance to Lord DOUGLAS.
Shew him these jewels, which his brother wore.
Thy look, thy voice, will make him feel the truth,
Which I by certain proof will soon confirm.

DOUGLAS.

I yield me and obey: but yet my heart
Bleeds at this parting. Something bids me stay
And guard a mother's life. Oft have I read
Of wond'rous deeds by one bold arm achiev'd.
Our foes are two; no more: let me go forth,
And see if any shield can guard GLENALVON.

Lady RANDOLPH.

If thou regard'st thy mother, or rever'st
Thy father's mem'ry, think of this no more.

One thing I have to say before we part :
 Long wert thou lost ; and thou art found, my child,
 In a most fearful season. War and battle
 have great cause to dread. Too well I see
 Which way the current of thy temper sets :
 To day I've found thee. Oh ! my long lost hope !
 If thou to giddy valour giv'st the rein,
 To morrow I may lose my son for ever.
 The love of thee, before thou saw'st the light,
 Sustain'd my life when thy brave father fell.
 If thou shalt fall, I have nor love nor hope
 In this waste world ! my son, remember me !

DOUGLAS.

What shall I say ? how can I give you comfort ?
 The God of battles of my life dispose
 As may be best for you ! for whose dear sake
 I will not bear myself as I resolv'd.
 But yet consider, as no vulgar name
 That which I boast sounds amongst martial men.
 How will inglorious caution suit my claim ?
 The post of fate unshrinking I maintain.
 My country's foes must witness who I am.
 On the invaders heads I'll prove my birth,
 Till friends and foes confess the genuine strain.
 If in this strife I fall, blame not your son,
 Who if he lives not honour'd, must not live.

Lady RANDOLPH.

I will not utter what my bosom feels.
 Too well I love that valour which I warn.
 Farewell, my son ! my counsels are but vain.

[Embracing.

And as high heaven hath will'd it all must be. [separate.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Gaze not on me, thou wilt mistake the path ;

I'll

I'll point it out again.

*[Just as they are separating, enter from the wood
Lord RANDOLPH and GLENALVON.]*

Lord RANDOLPH.

Not in her presence.

Now ———

GLENALVON.

I'm prepar'd.

Lord RANDOLPH.

No : I command thee stay.

I go alone : it never shall be said

That I took odds to combat mortal man.

The noblest vengeance is the most compleat.

[Exit Lord RANDOLPH.]

*[GLENALVON makes some steps to the same
side of the stage, listens and speaks.]*

GLENALVON.

Demons of death come settle on my sword,

And to a double slaughter guide it home !

The lover and the husband both must die.

[Lord RANDOLPH behind the scenes.]

Lord RANDOLPH.

Draw, Villain ! draw.

DOUGLAS.

Assail me not Lord, RANDOLPH ;
Not as thou lov'st thy self.

[Clasbing of swords.]

[GLENALVON running out.]

Now is the time.

*Enter Lady RANDOLPH at the opposite side of the stage,
faint and breathless.*

Lady RANDOLPH.

Lord RANDOLPH hear me ; all shall be thine own :

But

But spare ! Oh spare my son !

Enter DOUGLAS with a sword in each hand.

My mother's voice !

I can protect thee still.

Lady RANDOLPH.

He lives, he lives :

For this, for this to heaven eternal praise !

But sure I saw thee fall.

DOUGLAS.

It was GLENALVON.

Just as my arm had master'd RANDOLPH's sword,

The villain came behind me ; but I slew him.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Behind thee ! Ah ; thou'rt wounded ! O my child,

How pale thou look'st ! and shall I lose thee now ?

DOUGLAS.

Do not despair : I feel a little faintness ;

I hope it will not last.

[Leans upon his sword.]

Lady RANDOLPH.

There is no hope !

And we must part ! the hand of death is on thee !

O my beloved child ! O DOUGLAS, DOUGLAS !

[DOUGLAS growing more and more faint.]

DOUGLAS.

Too soon we part : I have not long been DOUGLAS.

O destiny ! hardly thou dealst with me :

Clouded and hid, a stranger to myself,

In low and poor obscurity I liv'd.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Has heav'n preserv'd thee for an end like this ?

DOUGLAS.

O had I fallen as my brave fathers fell,

Turning

Turning with fatal arm the tide of battle !
 Like them I should have smil'd and welcom'd death.
 But thus to perish by a villain's hand !
 Cut off from nature's and from glory's course,
 Which never mortal was so fond to run.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Hear justice ! hear ! are these the fruits of virtue ?

[DOUGLAS falls.]

DOUGLAS.

Unknown I die ; no tongue shall speak of me. —
 Some noble spirits, judging by themselves,
 May yet conjecture what I might have prov'd,
 And think life only wanting to my fame :
 But who shall comfort thee ?

Lady RANDOLPH.

Despair ! despair !

DOUGLAS.

O had it pleas'd high heaven to let me live
 A little while ! — my eyes that gaze on thee
 Grow dim apace ! my mother —

[Dies.]

Enter Lord RANDOLPH and ANNA.

Lord RANDOLPH.

Thy words, the words of truth, have pierc'd my heart.
 I am the stain of knighthood and of arms.
 Oh ! if my brave deliverer survives
 The traitor's sword —

ANNA.

Alas ! look there, my lord.

Lord RANDOLPH.

The mother and her son ! How curst I am !
 Was I the cause ? No : I was not the cause.
 You matchless villain did seduce my soul
 To frantic jealousy.

ANNA.

My lady lives :

The agony of grief hath but supprest
Awhile her powers.

Lord RANDOLPH.

But my deliverer's dead !

The world did once esteem Lord RANDOLPH well,
Sincere of heart, for spotless honour fam'd :

And, in my early days, glory I gain'd

Beneath the holy banner of the cross.

Now past the noon of life, shame comes upon me ;

Reproach, and infamy, and public hate,

Are near at hand : for all mankind will think

That RANDOLPH basely stab'd Sir MALCOLM's heir.

[Lady RANDOLPH recovering.]

Lady RANDOLPH.

Where am I now ? still in this wretched world !

Grief cannot break a heart so hard as mine.

My youth was worn in anguish : but youth's strength,

With hope's assistance, bore the brunt of sorrow ;

And train'd me on to be the object now,

On which omnipotence displays itself,

Making a spectacle, a tale of me,

To awe it's vassal, man.

Lord RANDOLPH.

O misery !

Amidst thy raging grief I must proclaim

My innocence.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Thy innocence !

Lord RANDOLPH.

My guilt

Is innocence, compared with what thou think'st it.

Lady RANDOLPH.

Of thee I think not : what have I to do
 With thee, or any thing ? My son ! my son !
 My beautiful ! my brave ! how proud was I
 Of thee, and of thy valour ! My fond heart
 O'erflow'd this day with transport, when I thought
 Of growing old amidst a race of thine,
 Who might make up to me their father's childhood,
 And bear my brother's and my husband's name :
 Now all my hopes are dead ! A little while
 Was I a wife ! a mother not so long !
 What am I now ? — I know. — But I shall be
 That only whilst I please ; for such a son
 And such a husband make a woman bold.

[*Runs out.*]

Lord RANDOLPH.

Follow her, ANNA : I myself would follow,
 But in this rage she must abhor my presence.

[*Exit ANNA.*]

Enter Old NORVAL.

NORVAL.

I heard the voice of woe ; heaven guard my child !

Lord RANDOLPH.

Already is the idle gaping croud,
 The spiteful vulgar, come to gaze on RANDOLPH.
 Begone,

NORVAL.

I fear thee not. I will not go.
 Here I'll remain. I'm an accomplice, Lord,

With thee in murder. Yes, my sins did help
 To crush down to the ground this lovely plant.
 O noblest youth that ever yet was born !
 Sweetest and best, gentlest and bravest spirit,
 That ever bless'd the world ! Wretch that I am,
 Who saw that noble spirit swell and rise
 Above the narrow limits that confin'd it !
 Yet never was by all thy virtues won
 To do thee justice, and reveal the secret,
 Which timely known, had rais'd thee far above
 The villain's snare. Oh ! I am punish'd now !
 These are the hairs that should have strew'd the ground,
 And not the locks of DOUGLAS.

*[Tears his hair, and throws
 himself upon the ground.]*

LORD RANDOLPH.

I know thee now : thy boldness I forgive :
 My crest is fallen. For thee I will appoint
 A place of rest, if grief will let thee rest.
 I will reward, altho' I cannot punish.
 Curst, curst GLENALVON, he escap'd too well,
 Tho' slain and baffled by the hand he hated.
 Foaming with rage and fury to the last,
 Cursing his conqueror, the felon dy'd.

Enter ANNA.

ANNA.

My Lord, my Lord !

LORD RANDOLPH.

Speak : I can hear of horror.

ANNA.

ANNA.

Horror indeed !

Lord RANDOLPH.

MATILDA ?

ANNA.

Is no more :

She ran, she flew like light'ning up the hill,
 Nor halted till the precipice she gain'd,
 Beneath whose low'ring top the river falls
 Ingulph'd in rifted rocks : thither she came,
 As fearless as the eagle lights upon it,
 And headlong down. — —

Lord RANDOLPH.

'Twas I ! alas ! 'twas I

That fill'd her breast with fury ; drove her down
 The precipice of death ! Wretch that I am !

ANNA.

O had you seen her last despairing look !
 Upon the brink she stood, and cast her eyes
 Down on the deep : then lifting up her head
 And her white hands to heaven, seeming to say,
 Why am I forc'd to this ? She plung'd herself
 Into the empty air.

Lord RANDOLPH.

I will not vent,

In vain complaints, the passion of my soul.
 Peace in this world I never can enjoy.
 These wounds the gratitude of RANDOLPH gave.
 They speak aloud, and with the voice of fate

Denounce

Denounce my doom. I am resolv'd. I'll go
 Straight to the battle, where the man that makes
 Me turn aside must threaten worse than death.
 Thou, faithful to thy mistress, take this ring,
 Full warrant of my power. Let every rite
 With cost and pomp upon their funerals wait:
 For RANDOLPH hopes he never shall return.

F I N I S

E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by Mr. BARRY.

*A*N Epilogue I ask'd; but not one word
Our bard will write. He vows 'tis most absurd
With comick wit to contradict the strain
Of tragedy, and make your sorrows vain.
Sadly he says, that pity is the best,
The noblest passion of the human breast:
For when its sacred streams the heart o'er-flow,
In gushes pleasure with the tide of woe;
And when its waves retire, like those of Nile,
They leave behind them such a golden soil,
That there the virtues without culture grow,
There the sweet blossoms of affection blow.
These were his words;—void of delusive art
I felt them; for he spoke them from his heart.
Nor will I now attempt, with witty folly,
To chase away celestial melancholy.

EPILOGUE

Spoken by Mr. D'ARCY.

And now, my friends, I bid you adieu;
Our parting will be soon, but not our love;
The world is full of dangers, and the heart
Of man is full of passions, and the soul
Is full of fears; but still, my friends, I say,
The noblest portion of the human mind
For virtue's sake, should strive to be as pure
As crystal, and as bright as the sun;
And when the world is full of darkness,
To be a light, and to be a guide,
That others may not wander in the night;
Then the power of reason, and the love
Of truth, will be our guide, and our light;
And when the world is full of strife,
To be a peace, and to be a friend,
That all may live in love and harmony,
That is the power of reason, and the love
Of truth, will be our guide, and our light.
I bid you adieu, my friends, with love;
And may the power of reason, and the love
Of truth, be your guide, and your light.

ELFRIDA,

A

Dramatic Poem.

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Written on the MODEL of

The Antient GREEK Tragedy.

By Mr. MASON.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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M.DCC.LII.

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MDCCLII.

LETTERS

CONCERNING

The following DRAMA.

LETTER I.

I Was aware, when I sent you my Poem, that it would be liable to the very objections you make to it. Yet perhaps, they will be obviated to your satisfaction, when I have laid before you (as indeed I ought to have done at first) the original idea which led me to chuse such a subject, and to execute it in so peculiar a manner.

Had I intended to give an exact copy of the ancient Drama, your objections to the present Poem would be unanswerable. But my design was much less confin'd. I meant only to pursue the ancient method so far as it is probable a Greek Poet, were he alive, would

now

now do, in order to adapt himself to the genius of our times, and the character of our Tragedy. According to this notion, every thing was to be allowed to the present taste, which nature and Aristotle could possibly dispense with; and nothing of intrigue or refinement was to be admitted, at which antient judgment could reasonably take offence. Good sense, as well as antiquity, prescribed an adherence to the three great Unities; these therefore were strictly observed. But on the other hand, to follow the modern masters in those respects wherein they had not so faultily deviated from their predecessors, a story was chosen, in which the tender, rather than the noble passions were predominant, and in which even love had the principal share. Characters too were drawn as nearly approaching to private ones, as Tragic dignity would permit; and affections rais'd rather from the impulse of common humanity, than the distresses of royalty and the fate of kingdoms. Beside this, for the sake of natural embellishment, and to reconcile mere modern readers to that simplicity of fable, in which I thought it necessary to copy the antients, I contriv'd to lay the scene in an old romantic forest. For, by this means, I was enabled to enliven the poem by various touches of pastoral description; not affectedly brought in from the
store-

store-house of a picturesque imagination, but necessarily resulting from the scenery of the place itself: A beauty, so extremely striking in the *Comus* of Milton, and the *As you like it* of Shakespeare; and of which the Greek Muse (tho' fond of rural imagery) has afforded few examples, besides that admirable one in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles.

By this idea I could wish you to regulate your criticism. I need not, I think, observe to you that these deviations from the practice of the antients may be reasonably defended. For we were long since agreed, that, where Love does not degenerate into episodical gallantry, but makes the foundation of the distress, it is, from the universality of its influence, a passion very proper for Tragedy. And I have seen you too much mov'd at the representation of some of our best Tragedies of private story, to believe you will condemn me for making the other deviation.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R II.

I Am glad, you approve the method, I have taken, of softening the rigor of the old Drama. If I have, indeed, softened it sufficiently for the modern taste, without parting with any of the essentials of the Greek method, I have obtain'd my purpose: which was to obviate some of the popular objections made to the antient form of Tragedy. For the current opinion, you know, is, that by the strict adherence to the Unities, it restrains the genius of the poet; by the simplicity of its conduct, it diminishes the pathos of the fable; and, by the admission of a continued chorus, prevents that agreeable embarrass, which awakens our attention, and interests our passions.

The universal veneration, which we pay to the name of Shakespeare, at the same time that it has improv'd our relish for the higher beauties of Poetry, has undoubtedly been the ground-work of all this false criticism. That disregard, which, in compliance merely with the taste of the times, he shew'd of all the necessary rules of the Drama, hath since been consider'd as a characteristic of his vast and original genius; and consequently set up as

a model for succeeding writers. Hence M. Voltaire remarks very justly, “ que le merite
 “ de cet auteur a perdu le Theatre Anglois.
 “ Le tems, que, seul fait la reputation des
 “ hommes, rend à la fin leurs defauts re-
 “ spectables.”

Yet, notwithstanding the absurdity of this low superstition, the notion is so popular amongst Englishmen, that I fear it will never be entirely discredited, till a poet rises up amongst us with a genius as elevated and daring as Shakespeare's, and a judgment as sober and chastis'd as Racine's. But as it seems too long to wait for this prodigy, it will not surely be improper for any one of common talents, who would entertain the public without indulging its caprice, to take the best models of antiquity for his guides; and to adapt those models, as near as may be, to the manners and taste of his own times. Unless he do both, he will, in effect, do nothing. For it cannot be doubted, that the many gross faults of our stage, are owing to the complaisance and servility, with which the ordinary run of writers have ever humour'd that illiterate, whimsical, or corrupted age, in which it was their misfortune to be born.

Milton, you will tell me, is a noble exception to this observation. He is so, and would

have been a nobler, had he not run into the contrary extreme. The contempt, in which, perhaps with justice, he held the age he liv'd in, prevented him from condescending either to amuse or to instruct it. He had, before, given to his unworthy Countrymen the noblest Poem, that genius, conducted by antient art, could produce; and he had seen them receive it with disregard, if not with dislike. Conscious therefore of his own dignity, and of their demerit, he look'd to posterity only for his reward, and to posterity only directed his future labours. Hence it was perhaps, that he form'd his *SAMPSON AGONISTES* on a model more simple and severe than Athens herself would have demanded; and took *Æschylus* for his master, rather than *Sophocles* or *Euripides*: intending by this conduct to put as great a distance as possible between himself and his contemporary writers; and to make his work (as he himself said) *much different from what amongst them passed for the best.*

The success of the Poem was, accordingly, what one would have expected. The age, it appeared in, treated it with total neglect; neither hath that posterity, to which he appealed, and which has done justice to most of his other writings, as yet given to this excellent piece its full measure of popular and
universal

universal fame. Perhaps in your closet, and that of a few more, who unaffectedly admire genuine nature and antient simplicity, the Agonistes may hold a distinguished rank. Yet, surely, we cannot say (in Hamlet's phrase) "*that it pleases the Million; it is still*" "*Caviar to the general.*"

Hence, I think, I may conclude, that unless one would be content with a very late and very learned posterity, Milton's conduct in this point should not be followed. A Writer of Tragedy must certainly adapt himself more to the general taste; because the Dramatic, of all kinds of Poetry, ought to be most universally relish'd and understood. The Lyric Muse addresses herself to the imagination of a reader; the Didactic to his judgment; but the Tragic strikes directly on his passions. Few men have a strength of imagination capable of pursuing the flights of Pindar: Many have not a clearness of apprehension suited to the reasonings of Lucretius and Pope: But ev'ry man has passions to be excited; and ev'ry man feels them excited by Shakespeare.

But, tho' Tragedy be thus chiefly directed to the heart, it must be observed, that it will seldom attain its end without the concurrent approbation of the judgment. And to procure this, the artificial construction of the

fable goes a great way. In France, the excellence of their several poets is chiefly measur'd by this standard. And amongst our own writers, if you except Skakespeare (who indeed ought, for his other virtues, to be exempt from common rules) you will find, that the most regular of their compositions is generally reckon'd their *Chef d'œuvre*, witness the *All for Love* of Dryden, the *Venice preserv'd* of Otway, and the *Jane Shore* of Rowe.

L E T T E R III.

THE scheme, you propos'd in your last, is I own practicable enough. Undoubtedly, most part of the Dialogue of the Chorus might be put into the mouth of an Emma or Matilda, who, with some little shew of sisterly concernment, might be easily made to claim kindred with Earl Athelwold. Nay, by the addition of an unnecessary incident or two, which would cost me no more than they are worth in contriving, and an unmeaning personage or two, who would be as little expence in creating, I believe I could quickly make the whole tolerably fit for an English Audience.

But for all this I cannot persuade myself to enter upon the task. I have, I know not

how (like many of my betters,) contracted a kind of veneration for the old Chorus; and am willing to think it essential to the Tragic Drama. You shall hear the reasons that incline me to this judgment. They respect the *Poet* and the *Audience*.

It is agreed, I think, on all hands, that, in the conduct of a fable, the admission of a Chorus lays a necessary restraint on the *Poet*. The two Unities of Time and Place, are esteem'd by some of less consequence in our modern Tragedy, than the third Unity of Action; but admit a Chorus, and you must, of necessity, restore them to those equal rights, which they antiently, enjoyed, and yet claim, by the *Magna Charta* of Aristotle. For the difference, which the use of the Chorus makes, is this. The modern Drama contents itself with a fact *represented*; the antient requires it to be *represented before Spectators*. Now as it cannot be suppos'd, that these Spectators should accompany the chief Personages into private apartments, one single Scene or *unity of Place* becomes strictly necessary. And as these Spectators are assembled on purpose to observe and bear a part in the action, the *time* of that action becomes, of course, that of the spectacle or representation itself; it being unreasonable to make the Spectators attend as long, as the Poet, in
bringing

bringing about his Catastrophe, may require. And this is usually the practice of the antient Stage. The modern, on the contrary, regards very little these two capital restraints; and its disuse of the Chorus helps greatly to conceal the absurdity. For the Poet, without offending so much against the laws of probability, may lead his personages from one part to another of the same palace or city, when they have only a paltry Servant or insignificant Confidant to attend them. He may think himself at liberty to spend two or three days, months or even years in compleating his story; to clear the Stage at the end, or, if he pleases, in the middle of every act: and, being under no controul of the Chorus, he can break the continuity of the Drama, just where he thinks it convenient; and, by the assistance of a brisk fugue and a good violin, can persuade his audience, that as much time has elaps'd as his Hero's, or rather his own distress may demand.

Hence it is, that secret intrigues become (as Mr. Dryden gravely calls them) the *beauties of our modern Stage*. Hence it is, that Incidents, and Bustle, and *Business*, supply the place of Simplicity, Nature, and Pathos: A happy change, perhaps, for the generality of writers, who might otherwise find

find it impossible to fill *cette longue carriere de cinq actes*, which a Writer, sufficiently experienced in these matters, says, *est si prodigieusement difficile à remplir sans Episodes*.

But, whatever these Play-makers may have gain'd by rejecting the Chorus, the true Poet has lost considerably by it. For he has lost a graceful and natural resource to the embellishments of Picturesque Description, sublime allegory, and whatever else comes under the denomination of *pure Poetry*. Shakespeare, indeed, had the power of introducing this naturally, and what is most strange, of joining it with *pure Passion*. But I make no doubt, if we had a Tragedy of his form'd on the Greek model, we should find in it more frequent, if not nobler, instances of his high Poetical capacity, than in any single composition he has left us. I think you have a proof of this in those parts of his historical plays, which are call'd Chorus's, and written in the common Dialogue metre. And your imagination will easily conceive, how fine an ode the description of the night, preceding the battle of Agincourt, would have made in his hands; and what additional grace it would receive from that form of composition.

With the means of introducing Poetry naturally is lost, also, the opportunity of conveying moral reflections with grace and propriety.

priety. But this comes more properly under consideration, when I give you my thoughts on the advantage the Audience receiv'd from a well-conducted Chorus.

L E T T E R I V.

IN my last I took no notice of that superior pomp and majesty, which the Chorus necessarily added to the scene of the Drama. I made no remarks on the agreeable variety it introduc'd into the versification and metre; nor shew'd how, by uniting the harmony of the Lyre to the pomp of the Buskin, musick became intimately connected with it, and furnished it with all its additional graces. These and many other advantages I might have insisted upon, had I thought them so material as the two I mentioned; the latter of which, namely its being a proper vehicle for moral and sentiment, is so material, that I think nothing can possibly atone for the loss of it.

In those parts of the Drama, where the judgment of a mixt audience is most liable to be misled by what passes before its view, the chief actors are generally too much agitated by the furious passions, or too much attach'd by the tender ones, to think coolly, and im-
press

press on the spectators a moral sentiment properly. A Confidant or Servant has seldom sense enough to do it, never dignity enough to make it regarded. Instead therefore of these, the antients were provided with a band of distinguish'd persons, not merely capable of seeing and hearing, but of arguing, advising, and reflecting; from the leader of which a moral sentiment never came unnaturally, but suitably and gracefully; and from the troop itself, a poetical flow of tender commiseration, of religious supplication, or of virtuous triumph, was ever ready to heighten the pathos, to inspire a reverential awe of the Deity, and to advance the cause of *honesty* and of truth.

If you ask me, how it augmented the pathetic, I cannot give you a better answer than the *Abbè Vatri* has done in his dissertation on the subject published in the *memoirs de l'Acad. des Inscri. &c.* “ It affected this
 “ (says he) both in its *odes*, and *dialogue*.
 “ The wonderful power of Music and the
 “ Dance is universally allowed. And, as
 “ these were always *accompagniments* to the
 “ Odes, there is no doubt but they contri-
 “ buted greatly to move the passions. It
 “ was necessary that there should be odes or
 “ intermedes, but it was also necessary, that
 “ these intermedes should not suffer the
 C “ minds

“ minds of the Audience to cool, but, on
 “ the contrary, should support and fortify
 “ those passions, which the previous scenes
 “ had already excited. Nothing imaginable
 “ could produce this effect better, than the
 “ choral songs and dances, which fill'd the
 “ mind with ideas corresponding to the sub-
 “ ject, and never fail'd to add new force to
 “ the sentiments of the principal personages.
 “ In the Dialogue also, the Chorus serv'd to
 “ move the passions by shewing to the spec-
 “ tators other spectators strongly affected by
 “ the action. A spectacle of such a kind as
 “ is fitted to excite in us the passions of
 “ *Terror*, and *Pity*, will not of itself so
 “ strongly affect us, as when we see others,
 “ also, affected by it. The Painters have
 “ generally understood this secret, and have
 “ had recourse to an expedient, similar to
 “ that of the Chorus of the Poets. Not
 “ content with the simple representation of
 “ an historical event, they have also added
 “ groups of assistant figures, and express'd in
 “ their faces the different passions, they
 “ would have their picture excite. Nay they
 “ sometimes insist into their service even ir-
 “ rational animals. In the *slaughter of the*
 “ *Innocents*, Le Brun was not satisfied with
 “ expressing all the horror, of which the
 “ subject is naturally capable, he has also

“ painted two Horfes with their hair stand-
 “ ing on end, and starting back, as afraid
 “ to trample upon the bleeding infants.
 “ This is an artifice which has often been
 “ employed, and which has always, succeed-
 “ ed. A good poet should do the same ;
 “ and Iphigenia should not be suffered to
 “ appear on the Theatre, without being ac-
 “ companied with persons capable of feeling
 “ her misfortunes.”

Had this ingenious Abbè seen the famous
 Bellifarius of Vandyke, I am apt to believe
 he would have thought it a much more noble
 illustration of the matter. The Soldier in
 that piece, tho’ so much condemn’d by our
 modern Professors of *Vertù* for being, as they
 say, the principal Figure, is the very thing,
 which raises this picture from a simple Por-
 trait (which it must otherwise have been) to
 the finest moral painting ; and in Greece
 would have plac’d the Painter amongst that
 class of Artists, which they esteem’d the
 noblest, the ΗΘΟΓΡΑΦΟΙ. The greatest
 Tragic Poet could not have rais’d a more
 exquisite distress, than this judicious Painter
 has done by the attitude of that Soldier ; as
 well as by the subordinate figures, which,
 with great propriety, are female ones ; no-
 thing being so likely to raise in a military
 mind that mixture of pity and disdain, which

he wanted to express, as to see such a hero
reliev'd by charity, and that too the charity
of girls and old women.

But, returning to my subject, I will just
observe to you, that if it be proper to assist
an audience in relishing the pathetic, by
shewing an imitation of that pathos in the
Chorus, it is much more so to instruct them
how to be affected properly, with the cha-
racters and actions which are represented in
the course of the Drama. The character of
PIERRE in *Venice preserv'd*, when left entirely
to the judgment of the audience, is perhaps
one of the most improper for public view,
that ever was produced on any stage. It is
almost impossible, but some part of the spec-
tators should go from the representation with
very false and immoral impressions. But had
that Tragedy been written on the antient plan;
had Pierre's character been drawn just as it is,
and some few alterations made in Jaffier's, I
know no two characters more capable of doing
service in a moral view, when justly animadvert-
ed upon by the Chorus. I don't say, I would
have trusted Otway with the writing of it.

To have done and to release you. Bad cha-
racters become on this plan as harmless in the
hands of the Poet, as the Historian; and good
ones becomes infinitely more useful, by how
much the Poetic is more forcible, than the
Historical mode of instruction.

L E T-

L E T T E R V.

THE reason, why in a former Letter you advis'd me to alter the Chorus, is made very apparent in your last. For, by persuading me to get the Odes set to music, and to risk the play on the stage, I understand only that you are willing, any how, to make it a more profitable work for me, than it can possibly be by means of the press alone.

Yet certainly, Sir, one single reflection on our British pit will make you change your sentiments effectually. Think only on the trial made by M. Racine, in a nation much before our's, in a taste for probability and decorum in Theatrical diversions. In his two last Tragedies, you know, he has fully succeeded in the very thing I aim'd at; and has adapted a noble imitation of antient simplicity to the taste of his own times: particularly in his *Athalie*, a poem in which the most superb and august spectacle, the most interesting event, and the most sublime flow of inspir'd Poetry, are all nobly and naturally united. Yet I am told, that neither that, nor the *Esther*, retains its Chorus, when represented on the French Theatre.

To what is this owing? To the refinement most certainly of our modern music. This
art

art is now carried to a pitch of perfection, or, if you will, of corruption, which makes it utterly incapable of being an adjunct to Poetry.

Il y a grand apparence, que les progres que vous avez faits dans la musique, ont nui enfin à ceux de la veritable Tragedie. C'est un talent, qui a fait tort à un autre ; says M. Voltaire with his usual taste and judgment. Our different cadences, our divisions, variations, repetitions, without which modern music cannot subsist, are intirely improper for the expression of poetry, and were scarce known to the ancients.

But could this be manag'd, the additional expence necessarily attendant on such a performance, would make the matter impracticable. This Mr. Dryden foresaw long ago. The passage is curious.

“ A new Theatre, much more ample and
 “ much deeper, must be made for that purpose ; besides the cost of sometimes forty
 “ or fifty habits : which is an expence too
 “ large to be supply'd by a company of actors.
 “ 'Tis true I should not be sorry to see a *Chorus*
 “ on a Theatre, more than as large and as deep
 “ again as our's, built and adorn'd at a King's
 “ Charges ; and on that condition, and another, which is, that my hands were not
 “ bound behind me, as now they are, I should
 “ not despair of making such a *Tragedy* as
 “ might be both *instructive* and *delightful* according

“ cording to the *manner* of the Grecians.” What he means by having *his hands bound*, I imagine, is, that he was either engag’d to his subscribers for a Translation of Virgil, or to the manager of the Theatre for so many plays a season. This suffrage of Mr. Dryden is, however, very apposite to the present point. But it serves, also, to vindicate my design of imitating the Greek Drama. For if he, who was so prejudiced to the modern stage, as to think intrigue a capital beauty in it; if he, I say, owns that the grand secret *prodesse et delectare* was the characteristic of the Greek Drama only, nothing I think can better justify my present attempt than the approbation he gives to it in this passage.

Having now settled with you all matters of general criticism, I hope in your next you will give me your objections to *scenes, speeches, images, &c.* And be assur’d I shall treat your judgment in these matters with greater deference, than I have done in what related to the Stage and the Chorus.

Persons of the Drama.

ORGAR, Earl of Devonshire.

CHORUS, of British Virgins.

ELFRIDA, Daughter to ORGAR.

ATHELWOLD, Husband to ELFRIDA.

EDWIN, a Messenger.

EDGAR, King of England.

ORGAR disguis'd in a Peasant's Habit
speaks the Prologue.

SCENE, a Lawn before ATHELWOLD's
Castle in *Harewood Forest*.

ELFRIDA,

A

Dramatic Poem.

O R G A N.

HOW nobly does this venerable wood,
 Gilt with the glories of the orient sun,
 Embofom yon fair mansion ! The soft air
 Salutes me with most cool and temp'rate breath ;
 And, as I tread, the flow'r-besprinkled lawn
 Sends up a gale of fragrance. I should guess,
 If e'er Content deign'd visit mortal clime,
 This was her place of dearest residence.
 Grant Heav'n ! I find it such. 'Tis now three months,
 Since first Earl Athelwold espous'd my daughter.
 He then besought me, for some little space
 The nuptials might be secret ; many reasons,
 He said, induc'd to this : I made no pause,
 But, resting on his prudence, to his will
 Gave absolute concurrence. Soon as married,

A

He to this secret seat convey'd Elfrida;
 Convey'd her as by stealth, enjoy'd, and left her:
 Yet not without I know not what excuse
 Of call to court, of Edgar's royal friendship,
 And England's welfare. To his prince he went:
 And since, as by intelligence I gather,
 He oft revisits this his cloyster'd wife;
 But ever with a privacy most studied,
 Borrowing disguises, till inventive art
 Can scarce supply him with variety.
 His visits, as they're stol'n, are also short;
 Seldom above the circuit of one sun:
 Then back to court, while she his absence mourns
 Full many a lonely hour. I brook not this.
 Had Athelwold espous'd some base-born peasant,
 This usage had been apt: but when he took
 My daughter to his arms, he took a virgin,
 Thro' whose rich veins the blood of ancient Kings
 Ran in unfullied stream. Yes, her high lineage
 Would give her place and notice with the noblest
 That shines in Edgar's court. Why is not she
 In that resplendent throng? Her beauty too
 (I speak not from a father's foolish fondness)
 Would smile amid the loveliest, and reflect
 No vulgar glory on that beauty's master.
 This act bespeaks the madman. Who, that own'd
 An em'erald, jasper, or rich chrysolite,

Would hide its lustre? he would bid it blaze
 Conspicuous, in the front of that fair wreath
 Which binds his brow. Haply this Athelwold
 May have espous'd some other. 'Sdeath he durst not.
 My former feats in arms must have inform'd him,
 That Orgar, while he liv'd, would never prove
 A traitor to his honor. If he has—
 This aged arm is not so much unstrung
 By slack'ning years, but just revenge will brace it.
 And, by yon awful heav'n—But hold, my rage.
 I came to scrutinize this matter coolly.
 Hence, to conceal the father and the earl,
 This pilgrim's staff, and scrip, and all these marks
 Of vagrant poverty.

C H O R U S (within)

Hail to thy living light, ambrosial Morn!
 All hail thy roseat ray!

O R G A R.

But hark, the sound of sweetest minstrelsy
 Breaks on my ear. The females, I suppose,
 Whom Athelwold has fixt my child's attendants;
 That, when she 'wails the absence of her lord,
 Their lenient airs, and sprightly-fancied songs,
 May steal away her woes. See, they approach:
 I'll wait the cadence of their harmony,
 And then address them with some feigned tale.

CHORUS.

O D E.

Hail to thy living light,
 Ambrosial Morn! all hail thy roseat ray :
 That bids gay Nature all her charms display
 In varied beauty bright ;
 That bids each dewy-spangled flowret rise,
 And dart around its vermeil dies ;
 Bids silver lustre grace yon sparkling tide,
 That winding warbles down the mountain's side.

Away, ye Goblins all,
 Wont the bewilder'd traveller to daunt ;
 Whose vagrant feet have trac'd your secret haunt
 Beside some lonely wall,
 Or shatter'd ruin of a moss-grown tow'r,
 Where, at pale midnight's stillest hour,
 Thro' each rough chink the solemn orb of night
 Pours momentary gleams of trembling light.

Away, ye Elves, away :
 Shrink at ambrosial Morning's living ray ;
 That living ray, whose pow'r benign
 Unfolds the scene of glory to our eye,
 Where, thron'd in artless majesty,
 The cherub Beauty sits on Nature's rustic shrine.—

CHORUS, OR GAR.

CHORUS.

Silence, my sisters. Whence this rudeness, stranger,
That boldly prompted thine unbidden ear
To listen these our strains?

OR GAR.

Your pardon, Virgins:
I meant not rudeness, tho' I dar'd to listen;
For ah! what ear so fortified and barr'd
Against the tuneful force of vocal charms,
But would with transport to such sweet assailants
Surrender its attention? Never yet
Have I past by the night-bird's 'custom'd spray,
What time she pours her wild and artless song,
Without attentive pause and silent rapture;
How could I then, with savage disregard,
Hear voices tun'd by nature sweet as hers,
Grac'd with all art's addition?

CHORUS.

Thy mean garb,
And this thy courtly phrase but ill accord.
Whence, and what art thou, stranger?

OR GAR.

Virgins, know
These limbs have oft been rob'd in fairer vest:

But what avails it now ? all have their fate ;
And mine has been most wretched.

CHORUS.

May we ask
What cruel cause—

ORGAR.

No ! let this hapless breast
Still hide the melancholy tale.

CHORUS.

We know,
There oft is found an avarice in grief ;
And the wan eye of Sorrow loves to gaze
Upon its secret hoard of treasur'd woes
In pining solitude. Perhaps thy mind
Takes the same pensive cast : if not, indulge
The tender temper of our virgin souls,
Which loves to melt in sympathizing tears
And social sighs.

ORGAR.

Ah ! ill would it become ye,
To let the woes of such a wretch as I am,
E'er dim your bright eyes with a pitying tear.

CHORUS.

The eye, that will not weep another's sorrow,
Should boast no gentler brightness than the glare,

That reddens in the eye-ball of the wolf.

Let us entreat——

ORGAR.

Know, Virgins, I was born

To ample property of lands and flocks,
On this side Tweeda's stream. My youth and vigor
Atchiev'd full many a feat of martial prowess:
Nor was my skill in chivalry unnoted
In the fair volume of my sov'reign's love ;
Who ever held me in his best esteem,
And closest to his person. When he paid,
What all must pay, to fate ; and short liv'd Edwy
Mounted the vacant throne, which now his brother
Fills (as loud fame reports) right royally ;
I then, unfit for pageantry and courts,
Retir'd me with a set of chosen vassals,
To my paternal seat. But ah ! not long
Had I enjoy'd the sweets of that recess,
Ere by the savage inroads of base hinds,
That sallied frequent from the Scottish heights,
My lands were all laid waste, my people murder'd ;
And I, thro' impotence of age unfit
To quell their brutal rage, was forc'd to drag
My mis'ries thro' the land, a friendless wand'rer.

CHORUS.

We pity and condole thy wretched state,
But we can do no more ; which, on thy part,

Claims just returns of pity : for whose lot
 Demands it more than theirs, whom fate forbids
 To taste the joys of courteous charity ;
 To wipe the trickling tears, which dew the cheek
 Of palsy'd age ; to smoothe it's furrow'd brow,
 And pay its grey hairs each due reverence ?
 Yet such delight we are forbid to taste ;
 For 'tis our lord's command, that not a stranger,
 However high or lowly his degree,
 Have entrance at these gates.

O R G A R.

Who may this tyrant—

C H O R U S.

Alas, no tyrant he ; the more our wonder
 At this harsh mandate : Tenderneſs and Pity
 Have made his breast their home. He is a man
 More apt, thro' inborn gentleness, to err,
 In giving mercy's tide too free a course,
 Than with a thrifty and illiberal hand
 To circumscribe its channel. This his praise
 You'll hear the general theme in Edgar's court :
 For Edgar ranks him first in his high favor ;
 Loads him with honors, which the Earl receives,
 As does the golden censer frankincense,
 Only to spread a sacred gale of blessings
 Thro' all the realm.

O R G A R.

Methinks, this pleasing portrait
Bears strong resemblance of Lord Athelwold.

C H O R U S.

Himself: no Briton but has heard his fame.

O R G A R.

'Tis wondrous strange; can you conceive no cause
For this his conduct?

C H O R U S.

None, that we may trust.

O R G A R.

Your garbs bespeak you for the fair attendants
Of some illustrious dame, the wife, or sister
Of this dread earl.

C H O R U S.

On this head too, old man,
We are commanded a religious silence:
Which strictly we obey; for well we know
Fidelity's the best and fairest wreath,
That can adorn a servant's brow. Farewell,
Depart with our best wishes; we do trespass
To hold such open converse with a stranger.

O R G A R.

Stay, Virgins, stay; have ye no friendly shed,
But bord'ring on your castle, where these limbs

Might lay their load of misery for an hour?
 Have ye no food, however mean and homely,
 Wherewith I might recruit defective nature?
 Ev'n while I speak, I feel my spirits fail;
 And well, full well, I know, these trembling feet,
 Ere I can pace a hundred steps, will sink
 Beneath their wretched burthen.

C H O R U S.

Piteous sight!
 What shall we do, my sisters? To admit
 This man beneath the roof, would be to scorn
 The Earl's strict interdict; and yet my heart
 Bleeds to behold that white, old, rev'rend head
 Bow'd with such misery.—Yes, we must aid him.
 Hie thee, poor Pilgrim, to yon neighb'ring bow'r,
 O'er which an old oak spreads his awful arm,
 Mantled in brownest foliage, and beneath
 The ivy, gadding from th' untwisted stem,
 Curtains each verdant side. There thou may'st rest,
 There also find some dry'd, autumnal fruit,
 Lodg'd in the hollow of its aged trunk.
 Much do we wish 'twere better fare.

O R G A R.

Kind Heav'n!
 Reward _____

C H O R U S.

Nay! stay not here to thank us,
 But haste to give your age this poor assistance.
 That done, we do conjure you leave the place
 With cautious secrecy; for was it known,
 That thus we trespass'd on our lord's command,
 The consequence were fatal.

O R G A R.

Fairest Maid!

Think not I'll basely draw down punishments
 On my preservers. I withdraw. May blessings
 Showr'd from yon fount of Bliss repay your kind-
 nefs.

[Exit Orgar.]

S E M I C H O R U S.

Yes, sisters, yes, when pale distress
 Implores your aiding hand,
 Let not a partial faithfulness,
 Let not a mortal's vain command
 Urge you to break th'unalterable laws
 Of heav'n-descended Charity.
 Ah! follow still the soft-ey'd Deity;
 For know, each path she draws,
 Along the plain of life,
 Meets at the central dome of social Joy.
 Follow the soft-ey'd Deity;
 She bids ye, as ye hope for blessings, bless.
 Aid then the gen'ral cause of gen'ral happiness.

SEMICHORUS.

Humanity ! thy awful strain
 Shall ever meet our ear,
 Sonorous, sweet, and clear.
 And as amid the sprightly-swelling train
 Of dulcet notes, that breath
 From flute or lyre,
 The deep base rolls its manly melody,
 Guiding the tuneful choir;
 So thou, Humanity, shalt lead along
 Th' accordant passions in their moral song,
 And give our mental concert truest harmony.

CHORUS.

But see, Elfrida comes
 Should we again resume our former strain,
 And hail the Morn that paints her waking beauties,
 Or wait her gentle bidding? Rather wait;
 For, as I think, she seems in musing mood:
 And there are times, when to the pensive soul
 The warbling voice of softest melody
 Seems but discordant harshness.

ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

O my Virgins,
 With what a leaden and retarding weight,
 Does Expectation load the wing of Time?
 How have these three dull hours crept languid on,

Since first the crimson mantle of the morn
 Skirted yon gay horizon ? Say, my Friends,
 Have I miscounted ? Did not Athelwold
 At parting fix this morn for his return.
 This dear long-wish'd for morn ? He did, he did,
 And seal'd it with a kiss ; I could not err.
 And yet he comes not. He was wont outstrip
 The sun's most early speed, and make its rising
 To me unwish'd and needless. This delay
 Creates strange doubts and scruples in my breast.
 Courts throng with beauties, and my Athelwold
 Has a soft, susceptible heart, as prone
 To yield its love to ev'ry sparkling eye,
 As is the musk-rose to dispense its fragrance
 To ev'ry whisp'ring breeze ; perhaps he's false,
 Perhaps Elfrida's wretched.

C H O R U S.

See, Elfrida,
 Ah see ! how round yon branching elm the ivy
 Twines its green chain, and poisons what supports it.
 Not less injurious to the blooming shoots
 Of growing love is sickly jealousy.

E L F R I D A.

My mind nor pines with sickly jealousy,
 Nor triumphs in security and peace.
 Who loves, must fear ; and sure who loves like me,
 Must greatly fear.

C H O R U S.

Yet whence the cause? Your Earl
 Has ever yet (this little breach excepted)
 Been punctual to appointment. Did his eye
 Glow with less ardent passion when he left you,
 Than at the first blest meeting? No, I mark'd him,
 His parting glance shot fervent, constant love,
 And fealty unalter'd. Do not fear him.

E L F R I D A.

I should not fear him, was his present stay
 The only cause. Alas, it is not, Virgin!
 Why comes my Earl so secret to these arms?
 Why, but because he fears some other fair
 Should hear of his stol'n transports? Why am I
 Here shrouded up, like the pale Votarist,
 Who knows no visitant, save the lone owl,
 That leaves his ivy-crested battlement,
 And sails on flow wing thro' the cloyster'd isles,
 Lift'ning her faintly orisons? Methinks,
 She who can boast Earl Orgar for her fire,
 (Orgar, whom copious Deva hails her lord
 Thro' each rich vale she laves,) might well expect
 To share the sports and splendor of the palace.

C H O R U S.

Covet not that; the noblest proof of love
 That Athelwold can give, is still to guard

Your tender beauties from the blasting taint
 Of courtly gales. The delicate soft tints
 Of snowy innocence, the crimson glow
 Of blushing modesty, there both fly off,
 And leave the faded face no nobler boast
 Than well-rang'd, lifeless features. Ah, Elfrida,
 Should you be doom'd, which happier fate forbid!
 To drag your hours thro' all that nauseous scene
 Of pageantry and vice; your purer breast,
 True to its virtuous relish, soon would heave
 A fervent sigh for innocence and Harewood.

E L F R I D A.

You much mistake me, Virgins; the throng'd palace
 Were undesir'd by me, did not that palace
 Detain my Athelwold. If he was here,
 His presence would convert this range of oaks
 To stately columns; these gay liv'ried flow'rs
 To troops of gallant ladies; and yon deer,
 That jutt their antlers forth in sportive fray,
 To armed knights at joust or tournament.
 If Athelwold dwelt here; if no ambition
 Could lure his steps from love, and this still forest;
 If I might never moan his time of absence,
 Longer than that which serv'd him for the chase
 Or of the wolf, or stag; or when he bore
 The hood-wink'd falcon forth; might these, my
 Virgins,

And these alone, be love's short intervals,
I should not have one thought remote from Hare-
wood.

C H O R U S.

And would you wish that Athelwold should slight
The weal of England, and on these light toys
Waste his unvalued hours? No, fond Elfrida;
His full-plum'd soul is wing'd for nobler flights:
There let it soar, nor, like the lofty lark,
That rides the sun-beam warbling, sudden drop
And roost itself in the low earthy furrow.

E L F R I D A.

What then, must England's welfare hold my Earl
For ever from these shades?

C H O R U S.

We say not that.

The youth, who baths in pleasure's limpid stream
At well-judg'd intervals, feels all his soul
Nerv'd with recruited strength; but if too oft
He swims in sportive mazes thro' the flood,
It chills his languid virtue. For this cause
Your Earl forbids, that these enchanting groves,
And their fair mistress should possess him wholly.
He knows he has a country and a king,
That claim his first attention; yet be sure,
'Twill not be long, ere his unbending mind
Shall seek a soft asylum from those cares,
Amid th' embow'ring shades that veil Elfrida.

ELFRIDA.

O be that speech prophetic; may he soon
 Seek these embow'ring shades! Meanwhile, my
 friends,
 Tune some harmonious lay, whose melting notes
 Flow in such sprightly descant as may speed
 The lazy hours, that now move slowly on
 With dull and flagging pinion. For sweet music
 Has got a magic spell to aid their flight,
 And make them skim thro' their diurnal round
 Swift as the swallow circles. Come, ye Virgins,
 Ye have been nurs'd amid yon Cambrian rocks,
 Where yet Posterity retains some vein
 Of that old minstrelsy, which whilom breath'd
 Thro' each time-honor'd grove of British oak.
 There, where the spreading consecrated boughs
 Fed the sage mistletoe, the holy Druids
 Lay rapt in moral musings; while the Bards
 Call'd from their wiry harps such solemn airs,
 As drew down Fancy from the realms of Light
 To paint some radiant vision on their minds,
 Of high mysterious import. Virgins, wake
 Some strain as sweetly soothing. I, reclin'd
 On yonder neighb'ring bank, will watch his coming.

[Exit Elfrida.]

CHORUS.

O D E.

The Turtle tells her plaintive tale,
 Sequester'd in some shadowy vale ;
 The Lark in radiant æther flotes,
 And swells his wild extatic notes :
 Meanwhile on yonder hawthorn spray
 The Linnet wakes her temp'rate lay ;
 She haunts no solitary shade,
 She flutters o'er no sun-shine mead,
 No love-lorn griefs depress her song,
 No raptures lift it loudly high,
 But soft she trills, amid th' aerial throng,
 Smooth simple strains of sob'rest harmony.

Sweet Bird ! like thine our lay shall flow,
 Nor gaily loud, nor sadly slow ;
 For to thy note sedate, and clear,
 CONTENT still lends a list'ning ear.
 Reclin'd this mossy bank along,
 Oft has she heard thy easy song :
 Why hears not now ? What fairer grove
 From Harewood lures her devious love ?
 What fairer grove than Harewood knows,
 More woodland walks, more fragrant gales,

More woodbine bowers, inviting soft repose.
 More streams flow-wand'ring thro' her winding vales.

Perhaps to some lone cave the Rover flies,
 Where lull'd in pious peace the Hermit lies.
 For, scorning oft the gorgeous hall,
 Where banners wave with blazon'd gold,
 There will the meek-ey'd Nymph delight to call,
 And with the solemn Seer high converse hold.

There, Goddess, on the shaggy mound,
 Where tumbling torrents roar around,
 Where pendant mountains o'er your head
 Stretch their formidable shade;
 You listen, while the holy Seer
 Slowly chaunts his vespers clear;
 Or of his sparing mefs partake,
 The fav'ry pulse, the wheaten cake,
 The bev'rage cool of limpid rill.
 Then, rising light, your host you bless,
 And o'er his faintly temples bland distill
 Seraphic day-dreams of heaven's happiness.

Where'er thou art, enchanting Maid,
 Thou soon wilt smile in Harewood's shade:
 Soon will thy fairy feet be seen,
 Printing this dew-impearled green;
 Soon shall we mark thy gestures meek,
 Thy glitt'ring eye, and dimpled cheek,
 What time thou seek'st, with willing haste,
 Thy lov'liest throne, Elfrida's breast.
 There seated on that iv'ry shrine,
 Where all the Loves and Graces lye,
 With them your hands shall mutual chaplets twine,
 And weave immortal wreaths of peace and joy.

And, hark, completing our prophetic strain,
 The fleet hoof rattles o'er the flinty plain;
 Now nearer, and now nearer sounds.
 Avaunt! ye vain, delusive Fears.
 Hark! Echo tells thro' Harewood's amplest bounds,
 That Love, Content, and Athelwold appears.

ATHELWOLD, ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

Look ever thus; with that bright glance of joy
Thus alway meet my transports. Let these arms
Thus ever fold me; and this cheek, that blooms
With all health's op'ning roses, press my lips,
Warm as at this blest moment.

ELFRIDA.

Athelwold,

I had prepar'd me many a stern rebuke;
Had arm'd my brow with frowns, and taught my eye
Th' averted glance of coldness, which might best
Greet such a loit'ring lover; but I find,
'Twas a vain task; for this my truant heart
Forgets each lesson, which resentment taught,
And in thy sight knows only to be happy.

ATHELWOLD.

My best Elfrida—Heav'ns! It cannot last.
The giddy height of joy, to which I'm lifted,
Is as a hanging rock, at whose low foot
The black and beating surge of Infamy
Rolls ready to receive, and sink my soul.

ELFRIDA.

So soon to fall into this musing mood—
I thought, my Lord, you promis'd you would leave

These cares behind at court. Nay, 'twas the cause
Assign'd for this my residence at Harewood,
That you might never come to these fond arms,
But with a breast devoid of public toil,
And fill'd alone with rapture and Elfrida.
Said you not so? Why then that pensive look,
That down-cast eye, that settled musing posture?
Surely the City's din, and this still forest
Have lost their difference. Wherefore stay I here?
I'll with you to the palace.

A T H E L W O L D.

Heav'n forbid!

E L F R I D A.

Nay, my best Lord, I meant it but in sport;
For should you bid me quit these blooming lawns,
For some bare heath, or drear unpeopled desert;
Believe me, I would think its wildness Eden,
If Athelwold with frequent visitation
Endear'd the savage scene: but yet I fear
My Father.

A T H E L W O L D.

Hah! why him?

E L F R I D A.

You know his temper;
How jealous of his rank, and his trac'd lineage
From royal ancestry. I fear me much,

He will not brook you should conceal me long
 In this lone privacy : No, he will deem it
 Far unbecoming her, whose veins are fill'd
 With the rich stream of his nobility.
 Should it be so, his hot and fiery nature,
 I doubt, will blaze, and do some dreadful outrage.

A T H E L W O L D.

He need not know it, or, if chance he should,
 It matters not, if so this forest life
 Seem of your own adoption and free choice.
 And that it will so seem, I trust That love,
 Which ever yet has met my wayward will
 With pleas'd compliance, and unask'd assent.

E L F R I D A.

And ever shall : yet blame me not, my Lord,
 If prying womanhood should prompt a wish
 To learn the cause of this your strange commotion,
 Which ever wakes, if I but drop one thought
 Of quitting Harewood.

A T H E L W O L D.

Go to the clear surface
 Of yon unruffled lake, and, bending o'er it,
 There read my answer.

E L F R I D A.

These are riddles, Sir—

ATHELWOLD.

No; for its glassy and reflecting surface
Will smile with charms too tempting for a palace.

ELFRIDA.

Does Athelwold distrust Elfrida's faith?

ATHELWOLD.

No: but he much distrusts Elfrida's beauty.

ELFRIDA.

Away: you trifle.

ATHELWOLD.

Never more in earnest;
I would not for the throne which Edgar sits on,
That Edgar should behold it.

ELFRIDA.

What, my Lord,
Think you the face, that caught your single heart,
Will make all hearts its captives? Vain surmise.
Yet grant it could; the face is yours alone:
Not Edgar's self would dare to seize it from you.
Edgar's a king, and not a tyrant.

ATHELWOLD.

True,
Edgar's a king, a just one; his firm feet
Walk ever in the fore-right road of honor:
Nor do I know what lure can draw his steps
Devious from that straight path, save only one:

That tempting lure is beauty. Ah! Elfrida,
 Throw but the dazz'ling bait within his view,
 The untam'd wolf does not with fiercer rage
 Burst the slight bondage of the silken net,
 Than he the ties of law. Late, very late,
 Smit casually with young Matilda's face,
 He strait commanded her reluctant Mother
 To yield her to his arms: nor had she 'scap'd
 The violating fervor of his love,
 Had not the prudent dame suborn'd her handmaid,
 To take the unchast office, and be led
 Veil'd in the mask of night, to Edgar's chamber
 A counterfeit Matilda. As it chanc'd,
 The damsel pleas'd the king, nor did detection
 A whit abate his fondness; he forgave
 The prudent mother, eas'd Matilda's fears,
 And led the wanton minstrel to his court,
 Where still she shares —

CHORUS.

Behold, Earl Athelwold,
 A messenger arrives; his speed and aspect
 Speak some important errand.

D

EDWIN, ATHELWOLD, ELFRIDA,
CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

How now, Edwin?

EDWIN.

The King, my Lord, is on his way to Harewood:

ATHELWOLD.

The King!

EDWIN.

His purpose is to pass thro' Mercia;
And in a hasty message, some two hours
After you left the palace, this his pleasure
Was sent you by Lord Seofrid; withall
Commanding your attendance. You being absent,
He straitway turn'd his course thro' this fair forest,
Meaning to chase the Stag; his train is small,
As was his purpose sudden.

ELFRIDA.

Good my Lord,
Why thus perplex'd?

CHORUS.

Heav'ns! what a deep Despair
Sits on his brow.

ELFRIDA.

The notice sure is short;
But that's a trifle, a small train requires
The smaller preparation: Let him come.

A T H E L W O L D.

Yes, let him come: So thou wilt say, Elfrida,
When thou hast heard my tale. Yes, let him come:
So wilt thou say, and let thy husband perish.

Yet shall these arms once more embrace thee closely,
Ere yet thou fly them as the pois'nous adder.

'Tis o'er: in that embrace Elfrida's Love
Was buried; and in that embrace, the Peace
Of wretched Athelwold.

E L F R I D A.

What may this be!

A T H E L W O L D.

O Edwin, Edwin, when surviving Malice
Shall prey upon the Fame of thy dead Master,
Wilt thou not someway strive to check the Feind's
Insatiate fury? Wilt thou see my name
Defil'd, and blacken'd with Detraction's venom,
And bear it patiently!

E L F R I D A.

What means my best —

A T H E L W O L D.

Peace; not a word of Best, or Lov'd, or Dear:
These are not titles now for thee to use,
Or me to triumph in. Virgins, retire;
We would awhile be private. Nay, return,

Concealment would be vain ; and ye and Edwin
Are bound to me. Albina ! as for you,
I fav'd your father, when his blood was forfeit.

C H O R U S.

Not I, great Earl, alone, but all this train
Are bound by ev'ry tye of faith and love
To gen'rous Athelwold ; to that mild master,
Who never forc'd our slavery to one act,
But of such liberal fort, as Freedom's self
Would smilingly perform.

A T H E L W O L D.

It may be so,
But where's the tye, Elfrida, that may bind
Thy faith and love.

E L F R I D A.

The strongest sure, my Lord,
The golden, nuptial tye. Try but its strength.

A T H E L W O L D.

I must perforce this instant. Know, Elfrida,
Once, on a day of high festivity,
The youthful King, encircled with his Nobles,
Crown'd high the spark'ling bowl ; and much of
Love,
Of Beauty much the sprightly converse ran.
When, as it well might chance, the brisk Lord
Ardulph

Made gallant note of Orgar's peerless daughter,
 And in such phrase as might enflame a breast
 More cool than Edgar's. Early on the morrow
 Th' impatient Monarch gave me swift commission
 To view those charms, of which Lord Ardulph's
 tongue

Had giv'n such warm description : To whose words
 If my true eye gave credence and assent,
 I had his royal mandate on the instant
 To hail you Queen of England.

ELFRIDA.

'Steal of which
 You came, and hail'd me Wife of Athelwold.
 Was this the tale I was so taught to fear?
 Was this the deed, that known would make me fly
 Thy clasping arm, as 'twere the poisonous adder?
 No, let this tender, fond embrace assure thee,
 That thy Elfrida's love can never dye;
 Or, if it could, this animating touch
 Would soon awake it into life and rapture.

ATHELWOLD.

Dost thou then pardon me? Come, injur'd sovereign,
 Plunge deep thy sword of justice in this breast,
 And I will dye contented.

ELFRIDA.

Heav'n forbid!

What can be done?

C H O R U S.

Indeed, ye constant pair,
 'Tis fit ye strive to fly the coming danger.
 For Safety now sits wav'ring on your Love,
 Like the light down upon the Thistle's beard
 Which ev'ry breeze may part. Say, noble Earl,
 What feint was us'd to lull the king's impatience?

A T H E L W O L D.

Soon as these shades had veil'd my beauteous bride,
 I hasted back to Edgar, laugh'd at Ardulph,
 And talk'd of Elfrid, as of vulgar beauties;
 Own'd no uncommon light'ning in her eye,
 No breast that sham'd the snow, or cheek the rose.
 The sprightly King believ'd me, and forgot her.

C H O R U S.

But an alliance, great as Athelwold's
 With Orgar's daughter, soon would blaze abroad,
 The theme of popular converse.

A T H E L W O L D.

True, it would;
 And for that reason, when I last was here,
 The King was taught I went to wed Elfrida.

E L F R I D A.

How so, my Lord?

A T H E L W O L D.

Thy Father, my Elfrida,
 Has rich possessions: These, and these alone,
 I made my theme of Love; and told the king,
 That tho' thy face (pardon the impious falsehood)
 Boasted not charms to grace a Monarch's throne,
 Yet would thy dow'r well suit his minister.
 I therefore meant to ask thee of thy father,
 And (that my want of skill in choice might 'scape
 All censure) hide thee close in Harewood castle.
 Edgar with smiles consented, and, I think,
 Harbours no thought of my disloyalty.

E L F R I D A.

If so, what danger now?

A T H E L W O L D.

Ask'st thou, what danger?
 'Sdeath, will that glance not instantly proclaim
 My tenfold treachery?

E L F R I D A.

He shall not see me.
 I'll hide me instant in some secret chamber,
 And robe this virgin in my bridal vestments.

A T H E L W O L D.

Thy Love, like balm, runs trick'ling o'er the wounds
 Of my torn bosom; yet 'tis vain, 'tis vain;

Thou must thy self appear, for Ardulph ever
Attends the king, and would detect the fraud.

E L F R I D A.

If so, yet still I can ensure our safety ;
For as you fear my softness of complexion,
I'll stain it with the juice of dusky leaves,
Or yellow berries, which this various wood
From tree or shrub will yield me. These I'll use,
And form a thousand methods to conceal
The little gleams of grace, which Nature lent me.
Fear not my caution.

A T H E L W O L D.

Gent'lest, best of Creatures,
Go, do then as thy tender care directs.
And yet how vain ? What wond'rous art can steal
The liquid lightnings from those radiant eyes,
Or rob the wavy ringlets of that hair
Of all their nameless graces ? Say it could,
Yet would that modest, but majestic mien,
That inborn dignity of soul, which breaths
Thro' each angelic gesture, still remain
To seize the heart of Edgar. Rest, Elfrida,
Rest as thou art, in all that blaze of beauty :
I must submit to my just lot and lose thee.

ELFRIDA.

Away, my Lord, with these too timid scruples :
 Fear not my carriage ; I will stoop my head,
 Drawl out an idiot phrase, and do each act
 With ev'n a rude and peasant awkwardness.

EDWIN.

Ere this, my Lord, I think, the King has reach'd
 The full midway ; 'twere fit you stood prepar'd
 To give him meeting.

ATHELWOLD.

Give him meeting, Edwin !
 Alas, I have no mask to veil my baseness.
 When deep contrition shadows all my soul,
 I cannot dress my features in light smiles,
 And look the thing I am not. No, these eyes
 Are not as yet true vassals to my purpose,
 As yet indeed I am but half a villain.

ELFRIDA.

You weigh this matter in too nice a balance.
 Your crime, my Lord, is but the crime of love ;
 Thousands like you have fail'd.

ATHELWOLD.

Millions have broke
 Their faith for beauty : and if beauty's beam
 Could blanch the stains of Falshood, that bright glance

Would change the ebon darkness of my crime
 To whitest Innocence. But oh! it cannot;
 Ev'n while I gaze upon it, Conscience tells me
 I ought not to have wrong'd the best of masters.—
 But thou art mine, and as thou art, Elfrida,
 I will or die or keep thee.

ELFRIDA.

Live, or die,
 I'm thine alike. Death cannot aught abate,
 Or life augment, my love. Let this embrace
 Be witness of my truth.

ATHELWOLD.

It shall, it shall:
 Thy ev'ry word and look declares thee faithful,
 Secure of all thy love, and all thy prudence,
 Returning confidence has arm'd my soul
 For this dread meeting: resting on thy truth
 I go——

[Exit Athelwold.]

ELFRIDA.

Go, and thy guardian saint preserve thee,
 Show'r blessings vast as would my lavish love,
 Had I his power to bless thee!

CHORUS.

Yes, my Sisters,
 The silent awe that reigns thro' all your train,

Befits ye well. Let no unhallow'd tongue
Dare to profane her virtue by its praise.

'Tis a bright prodigy, which Admiration
Must stand in silent gaze at, and behold
Full-plum'd Perfection take its eagle flight
Above Ambition, Sov'reignty, and Pride;
Above——

ELFRIDA.

What could Ambition to a heart
So fill'd with love as mine? If my late act
Had aught of noble and superior grace,
Impute it all to Love, to virtuous Love,
Than which what passion more impels the mind
To fair and gen'rous action? But the hours
Are precious now. I'll to yon neighb'ring grove:
There grows an azure flow'r, I oft have mark'd it,
Which stains the pressing finger, with a juice
Of dusky, yellow tinct: its name I know not.
I'll fetch and try it strait. Wait my return.

[*Exit Elfrida.*]

CHORUS.

O D E.

Whence does this sudden Lustre rise,
 That gilds the grove? Not like the noontide beam,
 Which sparkling dances on the trembling stream,
 Nor the blue lightning's flash swift-shooting thro'
 the skies.

But such a solemn steady Light,
 As o'er the cloudless azure steals,
 When Cynthia riding on the brow of night,
 Stops in their mid career her silver wheels,

Whence can it rise, but from the sober pow'r
 Of CONSTANCY? She, heav'n-born Queen
 Descends, and in this woodbine-vested bower,

Fixes her stedfast reign:
 Stedfast, as when her high command
 Gives to the starry band

Their radiant Stations in heav'n's ample plain,
 Stedfast, as when around this nether sphere,

She winds the purple year,
 Tells what time the Snow-drop cold
 Its maiden whiteness may unfold,
 When the golden harvest bend,
 When the ruddy fruits descend,

Then bids pale Winter wake, to pour
 The pearly hail's translucent show'r,
 To cast his silv'ry mantle o'er the woods,
 And bind in crystal chains the slumb'ring floods.

The Soul, which she inspires, has pow'r to climb
 To all the heights sublime
 Of Virtue's tow'ring hill,

That hill, at whose low foot weak-warb'ling strays
 The scanty stream of human praise,
 A shallow trickling rill.

While on the Summits hov'ring Angels shed,
 From their blest pinions, the nectareous dew
 Of rich immortal Fame: From these the Muse
 Oft steals some precious drops, and blends with art

With those the lower streams impart;
 Then show'rs it all on some high-favor'd head.
 But thou, Elfrida, claim'st the genuine dew;

Thy worth demands it all,
 Pure, and unmixt on thee the sacred drops shall fall.

Elfrida returns with flowers.

ELFRIDA, ORGAR, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA. [*looking on the flower*]

'Tis strange, my Virgins, this sweet child of Summer,
 Silken and soft, whose breath perfumes the air,
 Whose gay vest paints the Morn, should in its bosom
 Hide such pollution? Yet 'tis often thus:
 All are not as they seem.

ORGAR.

Yet hear me, Lady.

ELFRIDA.

Begone, unmanner'd Stranger, nor pursue me;
 Hence, from the grove. Know ye this Pilgrim,
 Virgins?
 On my return I met him here.

CHORUS.

Alas;

He came at break of day, and told a tale,
 That mov'd our pity—But I fear me now,
 'Twas false; some spy perchance, and may have
 heard—

ORGAR.

I have; yet not for that are you betray'd.
 Fair Excellence, my heart is bound unto you,
 I feel a tender interest in your welfare,
 Tender as Fathers feel.

ELFRIDA.

As Fathers feel;
That well-known voice, and ah! that look—

ORGAR.

Elfrida!

ELFRIDA.

Yes, it is he, it is my Father, Virgins.
Support me, or I faint! O wherefore, Sir?—

ORGAR.

Take courage, Daughter; my parental fondness
Prompted this visit. Thus I came disguis'd,
To learn the cause of my dear child's confinement:
And I have learnt it.

ELFRIDA.

Then all's lost for ever.

ORGAR.

Thou know'st, Elfrida, next my house's honor,
Thy peace has ever been my dearest care.
But such an insult—No: I cannot brook it.
So black a fraud! By all my ancestors,
By Offa's shade, I will have ample vengeance.

ELFRIDA.

Alas, I know too well your dreadful purpose:
I knew it at the first. Yes, he must fall.

Yet pardon me, if my poor trembling heart
 Puts up I know not what of pray'rs and vows
 To ev'ry pitying faint. Celestial Guardians
 Of nuptial Constancy! O bend from heav'n
 Your star-crown'd heads, and hear a wretched wo-
 man,

That begs ye save, from a dread father's rage,
 Her lord, her husband.

O R G A N.

Husband! 'Sdeath what husband?
 Is Athelwold thy husband? Sooner call
 Th' impeached thief true master of the booty
 He stole, or murder'd for. Disdain the Villain;
 And help me to revenge thee.

C H O R U S.

Think, great Earl,
 What sanctimonious ties restrain your daughter.
 Did she not swear before the hallow'd shrine
 Eternal fealty to this her Lord?
 Yet say, that he deceiv'd her; shall her truth
 Dare to revenge? No, Sir, in highest heav'n
 Vengeance mid storms and tempests sits enshrin'd,
 Vested in robes of light'ning, and there sleeps,
 Unwak'd but by th' incens'd Almighty's call.
 O, let not Man presume to take unbid
 That dread vicegerency.

O R G A R.

Peace, Virgins, peace.

The laws of Druids, or the chaunt of Bards,
 Have little weight with me, when insults high
 Rouse my just indignation. Hear me, Daughter,
 You went to search for flow'rs, to blot your charms
 With their dun hue. Yes, you may search for
 flow'rs,

Yet shall they be the loveliest of the spring:
 Flow'rs, that entangling in your auburn hair,
 Or blushing mid the whiteness of your bosom,
 May, to the power of ev'ry native grace,
 Give double life, and lustre. Haste, My child,
 Array thyself in thy most gorgeous garb,
 And see each jewel, which my Love procur'd thee,
 Dart its full radiance. More than all, put on
 The nobler ornament of winning smiles,
 And kind inviting glances.

E L F R I D A.

Never, never;

When this true heart renounces Athelwold,
 May equitable heav'n. —

O R G A R.

Nay, swear not, Elfrid;

But with a duteous, and attentive Ear,
 Listen to my persuasions. Much I wish
 Persuasions might prevail, that not compell'd

To use a Father's just prerogative,
 My will may meet with thy unforc'd obedience.
 Follow me, on thy duty.

ELFRIDA.

Cruel Father,
 That duty shall obey you ; I will follow :
 Yet not to quit my Love. So Mercy shield me,
 As I hold true to Athelwold !

Exeunt Orgar and Elfrida.

SEMICHORUS.

Horror ! Horror !
 The Pen of Fate dipt in it's deepest gall,
 Perhaps on that ill-omen'd wall,
 Now writes th' event of this tremendous day.
 O ! that our weaker sight
 Could read the mystic characters, and spy
 What to the unpurg'd, mortal Eye,
 Is hid in endless Night.

SEMICHORUS.

Suspense ! thou frozen guest, be gone.
 The wretch, whose rugged bed
 Is lin'd with thorns, more softly rests his head,
 Than he who sinks amid the cyncet's down,
 If thou tormenting feind be nigh,
 To prompt his starting tear, his ceaseless sigh,
 His wish, his pray'r, his vow for ling'ring certainty.

CHORUS.

But hark ! that certainty arrives. Methought,
 I heard the winding horn. I did not err ;
 The King is near at hand. This quick approach
 Will sure prevent this proud Earl's cruel purpose.
 Yet what of that ? Does her fair form require
 The blazon of rich vesture ? Genuine beauty
 Nor asks, nor needs it : Negligence alone
 Is its bright diadem, and artless ease
 Its robe of Tyrian tincture. Say, my Sisters,
 Shall we salute this Monarch with a hymn
 Of Festival and Joy ! Alas, such joy
 Ill suits our trembling hearts, and weeping Eyes.
 And now 'twere vain ; for see, the King approaches.

EDGAR, ATHELWOLD, CHORUS.

EDGAR.

No, Athelwold ; not from a partial blindness,
 Or for the mode and guise of courtesy,
 Are we thus large in praise ; in our true judgment,
 This castle is not more kind Nature's debtor
 For this its happy site, than 'tis to thee
 For that just symmetry, and modest skill
 Which decks the general structure. Not a frieze,
 Or moulded pediment, but in its parts
 Claims kindred with the whole ; for Ornament

Is here the offspring of Necessity,
Not the vain flourish of unmeaning art.

[*seeing the Chorus.*]

But ah ! what nobler beauties catch mine eye,
Thy castle's beauty, my lov'd Athelwold,
Has amplest proof, in having pow'r to hold
Mine Eye from such a prospect. Pardon, fair ones ;
To take your graces thus at second note
Was sure uncommon blindness.

ATHELWOLD.

Heav'ns ! they weep.
What may this mean ? Some dread and unseen
chance
Has counterwork'd my safety.

EDGAR.

Whence this silence ;
Why are your lovely Heads thus bow'd with sadness ?
Beslrew my heart, my Lords, but this is strange,
I know thee, Earl, and know thy gentleness,
More prone t'obey, than lord it o'er the sex ;
Else should I guess this sorrow had its rise,
From some discourteous treatment.

CHORUS.

No, dread Sov'reign ;
He is the noblest, gentlest, best of masters ;
And may your Love reward——

ORGAR, ATHELWOLD, EDGAR,
CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

Death to my hopes !

ORGAR.

Yes, Villain, start ; but let this vengeful arm
Arrest thy baseness ; would to heav'n its strength
Thus grasping thee, could open thy false breast,
And bare thy heart to the sham'd eye of Day.

EDGAR.

Patience, hot Man. What art thou ?

ORGAR.

I am Orgar——

Pardon me, Prince ; that this my honest rage
O'erleaps obedient duty. I am wrong'd,
Yet that's but small ; 'tis not my private wrongs
But yours, much-injur'd prince, that call for justice.
Yes, Sir, I here on a true subjects oath,
Proclaim Earl Athelwold a faithless traitor.

EDGAR.

Ha ! what is this ? Renounce the word, old Earl ;
Thy length of years hath forc'd thee, sure, to press
The verge of dotage. Athelwold ! what Athelwold
A faithless traitor ? Perish the suspicion,

Never before did word, or thought, or look,
 Give doubt of his distinguish'd loyalty.
 Dotage alone could frame the accusation.

EDGAR.

I do not dote, thank Heav'n, my faculties
 Are yet my own, unblemish'd and unhurt.
 Would so my Daughter were!

EDGAR.

What is his drift?

ATHELWOLD.

Better my royal Lord you markt him not;
 The wayward Earl is——

EDGAR.

What, audacious Villain!
 I will be heard.

EDGAR.

Go to, thou choleric Lord.

EDGAR.

When thou hast heard me, King, then call me
 choleric.

EDGAR.

Speak then and briefly.

O R G A R.

Once my sacred Liege,
 I had a daughter, duteous as e'er crown'd
 A Father's wish, and lovely as could warm
 A youth to am'rous transports. This, my Lord,
 You learnt long since from noble Ardulph's praises
 And fir'd with his description, sent this Earl,
 This faithful Earl, t'invite her to your throne.

E D G A R.

No, Orgar, not t'invite her to our throne,
 Simply to note her beauty was his errand.

O R G A R.

Yes, he did note it, stamp't it for his own.
 But why this parley? Enter, Sir, these gates,
 And let Elfrida's features be the book,
 Where you may read the story of his fallhood,
 E'en at one glance.

E D G A R.

Lead on then, noble Lord.

We'll follow to the tryal. I will humour
 The Earl's hot temper. He has heard, my friend,
 We meant t'exalt his daughter, and for that,
 His partial fondness, link'd with his ambition,
 Levels this rage at thee. Attend us, Lords.

Exeunt Edgar, Orgar, &c.

CHORUS, ATHELWOLD.

CHORUS.

My Lord, the King is enter'd : stand not thus
In statue-like Distress.

ATHELWOLD.

Away, away ;

What ! can a Man that thinks such thoughts as I do
Have pow'r of act, and motion ? speak to me ;
Inform me all. What said she, when I left her ?
How came her Father hither ? how did she
Greet his arrival ? Say, was she compell'd,
Or did her free, and voluntary voice
Tell all the story ? Did she marshall him,
To this his deed of vengeance ?

CHORUS.

Dearest Master ;

Elfrida told him not : his own deceit
Was his informer. Here the Earl arriv'd
Early at morn, in mean and pilgrim weeds,
All like an antient, toil-worn traveller ;
And with a tale told in such piteous strain,
Fraught with such sad and moving circumstance,
With woes so well dissembled ; that our softness,
Suffer'd him enter this close bower for rest,
Which he adapting to his prying purpose,

Thence learnt the secret. This our disobedience,
We own——

ATHELWOLD.

Was my perdition, yet 'tis well ;
I blame ye not ; it was the work of Fate.
Fate brought him hither, Fate annull'd your faith.
I do not think, you purpos'd my destruction ;
But yet you have destroy'd me. O Elfrida,
And art thou faithful ? This my jealous eye
Thought it had markt some speck of change upon
thee ;
Thought it had found, what might have made thy loss
Somewhat within endurance. 'Tis not so ;
And this thy purity but serves t'augment
The sum of my distractions. Meet me, Edgar,
With thy rais'd sword : be merciful and sudden—

Exit Athelwold.

C H O R U S.

O D E.

Say, will no white-rob'd Son of Light,
 Swift-darting from his heav'nly height,
 Here deign to take his hallow'd stand ;
 Here wave his amber locks, unfold
 His pinions cloth'd with downy gold ;
 Here smiling stretch his tutelary wand ?

And you, ye host of Saints, for ye have known
 Each dreary path in Life's perplexing maze,
 Tho' now ye circle yon eternal throne
 With harpings high of inexpressive praise,
 Will not your train descend in radiant state,
 To break with Mercy's beam this gathering cloud
 of Fate ?

'Tis silence all. No Son of Light
 Darts swiftly from his heav'nly height,
 No train of radiant Saints descend.
 " Mortals, in vain ye hope to find,
 " If guilt, if fraud has stain'd your mind,
 " Or Saint to hear, or Angel to defend."

So TRUTH proclaims. I hear the sacred sound
 Burst from the centre of her burning throne.

Where aye she sits with star-wreath'd lustre
crown'd,

A bright Sun clasps her adamantine zone.

So TRUTH proclaims: her awful voice I hear,
With many a solemn pause it slowly meets my ear.

“ Attend, ye Sons of Men ; attend, and say,”

Does not enough of my refulgent ray

Break thro' the veil of your mortality !

Say, does not Reason in this form descry

Unnumber'd, nameless glories, that surpass

The Angel's floating pomp, the Seraph's glowing
grace ?

Shall then your earth-born daughters vie

With me ? Shall she, whose brightest eye

But emulates the diamond's blaze,

Whose bosom mocks the fleecy snow,

Whose cheek the rose's damask glow,

Whose melting voice the warbling woodlark's lays ;

Shall she be deem'd my rival ? Shall a form

Of elemental dross, of mould'ring clay,

Vie with these charms imperial ? The poor worm
Shall prove her contest vain. Life's little day

Shall pass, and she is gone : while I appear,

Flush'd with the bloom of youth thro' Heav'n's
eternal year.

Know, Mortals, know ; ere first ye sprung,
 Ere first these orbs in æther hung,
 I shone amid the heav'nly throng.
 These eyes beheld Creation's day,
 This voice began the choral lay,
 And taught Archangels their triumphant song.
 Pleas'd I survey'd bright Nature's gradual
 birth,
 Saw infant Light with kindling lustre spread,
 Soft vernal fragrance clothe the flow'ring earth,
 And Ocean heave on his extended bed ;
 Saw the tall Oak aspiring pierce the sky,
 The tawny Lion stalk, the rapid Eagle fly.

Last, Man arose, erect in youthful grace,
 Heav'n's hallow'd image stamp'd upon his face,
 And, as he rose, the high behest was giv'n,
 “ That I alone of all the host of heav'n,
 “ Should reign Protectress of the godlike
 Youth.”
 Thus the Almighty spake: he spake and call'd me
 TRUTH.

ATHELWOLD, EDWIN, CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

Banish me! No. I'll die. For why should Life
 Remain a lonely lodger in that breast
 Which Honor leaves untenanted. Vain breath!
 Thou ill can'st fill such vacancy. Begone.
 This sword shall free —

CHORUS.

O shame to Fortitude!
 Shame to that manly passion, which inspires
 Its vigorous warmth, when the bleak blasts of Fate
 Would chill the soul. O call the ready Virtue
 Quick to thy aid, for she is ever near thee,
 Is ever prompt to spread her sevenfold shield
 O'er noble breasts.

ATHELWOLD.

And but o'er noble breasts;
 Not o'er the breast which livid Infamy
 Indelibly has spotted. O shame, shame.
 Sword, rid me of the thought.

CHORUS.

Forbear, forbear ;
 Think what a sea of deep perdition whelms
 The wretch's trembling soul, who launches forth
 Unlicenc'd to Eternity. Think, think,
 And let the thought restrain thy impious hand.
 The race of Man is one vast, marshall'd army,
 Whose num'rous squadrons fill the plains of Time,
 Their leader the Almighty. High in air
 That chos'n Archangel rides, whose right hand
 wields
 Th' imperial standard of his providence,
 Which dreadly sweeping thro' the vaulted sky
 O'er-shadows all Creation.

ATHELWOLD.

 I was once ——
 Yes, I was once (I have his royal word for't)
 A man of such try'd faith, such steady honor,
 As mock'd all doubt and scruple.—What a change!
 Now must that unstain'd, virgin character
 Be doom'd to gross and hourly prostitution
 Sating the lust of slander ; and my wife,
 My chaste Elfrida ! O distraction, no,
 I'll fly to save her.

EDWIN.

Stay, my dearest Master;
You rush on instant death.

ATHELWOLD.

I mean it, slave,
And would'st thou hinder me?

EDWIN.

Yes, Sir, I hold
'Tis duty to my king, and love to you,
Thus to oppose your entrance.

ATHELWOLD.

What thou traitor!

Thy pardon, Edwin, I forgot myself;
Forgot, that I stood here a banish'd Man,
And that this gate was shut against its Master.
And yet this gate leads to my dear Elfrida,
Can it be barr'd to me? O Earth, cold Earth,
Upon whose breast I cast this load of mis'ry,
Bear it awhile; and you, ye aged Oaks,
Ye venerable Fathers of this wood,
Who oft have cool'd beneath your arching shades
My humble ancestors, oft seen them hie
To your spread umbrage, from yon sultry field,
Their scene of honest labor. Shade, ah! shade,

The last, the wretchedest of all their race.
 I will not long pollute ye, for I mean
 To pay beneath your consecrated gloom
 A sacrifice to honor, and the ghosts
 Of those progenitors, who sternly frown
 On me their base descendant.

EDWIN.

See, ye Virgins,
 See how Despair beneath his ghastly brow
 Stretches her blackest cloud, thro' whose thick night
 His Eyes fast-rooted in their angry rings
 Dart a dire glare.

CHORUS.

Edwin, 'tis ever thus
 With noble minds, if chance they slide to folly ;
 Remorse stings deeper, and relentless Conscience,
 Pours more of gall into the bitter cup
 Of their severe repentance.

ATHELWOLD.

'Tis resolv'd,
 I'll enter and demand a second audience.
 And yet how vain? Ere I can reach his ear,
 His ready train will stop me, and with all
 The cruel punctuality of office,
 So prompt to act 'gainst fallen favorites,
 Dismiss me with reproof.—Surely I heard her,
 Was't not Elfrida's voice? 'Tis she herself.

ELFRIDA, EDGAR, ATHELWOLD,
ORGAR, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

No, I will once more clasp him to my bosom.
I will not be withheld. I will o'ertake him,
Will follow him to exile. Hah, my Husband!
So quickly found? They thought to tear me from
thee,
But we will part no more.

EDGAR.

Take heed, Elfrida,
This ill-tim'd fondness may recall the fate
I just now freed him from; who loves like me
Can ill brook this. Or quit him, or he dies.

ATHELWOLD.

Yes, let me die! Death is my dearest wish.
Quit me, Elfrida! leave me to my fate.
'Tis just, 'tis just. Thus to my 'sov'reign's sword
Freely I bare my breast. Strike, injur'd Prince;
But do not banish me.

ELFRIDA.

What, Athelwold,
Is then the life, on whose dear preservation
Elfrida's peace depends, not worth the saving?

H

Die then. But e'er thy murderer strikes the stroke,
 Let me inform him, that his act destroys
 No single life.

EDGAR.

By heav'n, she loves the traitor
 Beyond all hope of change—

ELFRIDA.

No, Athelwold,
 Thou shalt not die. That pause in royal Edgar
 Bespeaks calm recollection and weigh'd thought,
 And his relenting tongue shall quickly seal
 Thy liberal pardon. Come, my Lord, let's kneel;
 Now's the blest time; here let us kneel together,
 And as these streaming eyes and lifted hands
 Employ each act of silent supplication,
 Do thou recount——Ah! no, thy modest tongue
 Could never tell ev'n half the gallant story.
 Be silent then. Let Edgar's self reflect,
 For well I know his Mem'ry writes thy Virtues
 Upon its fairest page. Yes, let him weigh
 All thy past deeds of loyalty and faith,
 'Gainst this so light a fault.

EDGAR.

So light a fault !

Had he dislodg'd my richest coffer'd treasures,
 Dispers'd sedition's poison 'mid my troops,
 Or aim'd with daring and rebellious hand
 To snatch these regal honors from my brow,
 I sooner could have pardon'd.

A TH E L W O L D.

Cease, Elfrida,
 My doom is just—Yes, royal Sir, I'll go
 To banishment. I do deserve to breath,
 Deserve to bear this load of life about me
 For many years; to lengthen out my age,
 Lifting the hourly knell of curst remembrance;
 Whose leaden stroke shall tell to my sad soul
 That I was faithful once.

E L F R I D A.

O flinty Edgar,
 What ! will this penitence not move thee ? Know
 There is a rose-lip'd Seraph sits on high,
 Who ever bends his holy ear to earth
 To mark the voice of Penitence, to catch
 Her solemn sighs, to tune them to his harp,

And echo them in harmonies divine
Up to the throne of grace. Ev'n Heav'n is won
By Penitence, and shall Heav'n's substitute,
Shall Edgar scorn—

E D G A R.

Cease, cease, thou beauteous pleader!
Ah far too beauteous! Wouldst thou gain thy suit,
Why glows that vermeil lip? why rolls that Eye
Bright as the ray of Morn? Why in each gesture
Such inexpressive graces? Why, but because
They're native all, and will not be conceal'd.
Else sure each charm betrays him, and becomes
An advocate, whose silent eloquence
Pleads 'gainst thy tongue, and foils its strongest
rhet'ric.

Traitor! was this the face which thy false tongue
Prophan'd as vulgar? This such common beauty
As the fair eye of Day beheld each hour
In ev'ry clime he lighted? Base dissembler,
This instant quit our realm.

E L F R I D A.

O stay thee, Edgar,
And once more hear me. At thy feet I fall
As earnest, and distressed a suppliant,
As e'er embrac'd the knees of Majesty.

O spare thy Country's guardian, Edgar, spare
 Thy closest, surest friend. Let not one fault,
 Cancell his thousand, thousand acts of faith.
 Alas! I fall to vainest repetition.
 Grief, whelming grief drowns all my faculties
 And leaves me nought but tears.

EDGAR.

Rise, rise Elfrida.

ELFRIDA.

Shall he then live?

EDGAR.

He shall, he shall, my fair,
 If so he quit the realm within the space,
 Our Sentence limited.

ELFRIDA.

O stop not there;
 That sentence will be death to Athelwold.
 Think, for thou know'st full well his gentle nature,
 Can he support the rigour of this doom?
 Can he who liv'd but in thy gracious smiles,
 Who'd pine, if chance those smiles a single hour
 Were dealt him thriftily; Think can he bear
 The infamy of exile?

EDGAR.

Hear me, Athelwold.
 Did I not show'r on thy much-favor'd head
 My thickest honors, and with gift so ready
 As out-run all request? Did I not hold thee,
 Still in such open confidence of friendship?
 Such love as —

ATHELWOLD.

Sooner stab me than repeat it.

EDGAR.

Yet give me hearing. I repeat not this
 To taunt, or gall thee. On my soul, thy worth
 Did o'ertop all those honors, and thy zeal
 Kept pace with my best love. Nor till this Deed—
 But such a deed! look there, look on that face.
 Thou know'st me, Athelwold, hast seen me gaze
 On a soft yielding fair one, till mine Eye
 Shot flames. Perdition seize me, Earl,
 If I knew Love till now.

ATHELWOLD.

I see it plainly,
 Nor say I ought to lessen my offence.
 No, here I kneel, Oh! cast but on my mis'ry
 One kind forgiving glance; this ready sword
 Shall expiate all.

ELFRIDA.

Ah! will you? must he die?

EDGAR.

No stay thee, Athelwold, and sheath thy sword;
 I never yet (save but this hour of rage)
 Deem'd thee my subject. Thou wert still my friend;
 And, injur'd as I am, thou still art such:
 I do forego the word; to banish thee
 Or seal thy death, transcends a friend's just right.

ELFRIDA.

It does, it does, surpassing goodness. Virgins, I
 The King will pardon him. Wake each high note
 Of praise, and gratitude, teach Edgar's name
 To Harewood's furthest Echo. O my Sov' reign
 What words can speak —

EDGAR.

Ah, check these transports, Lady.
 Lest, if I see thee thus, my soul forget
 Its fair resolve. I'll leave thee on the instant.
 Yet first my lips must press this gentle hand,
 And breath one soft sigh of no common fervor.
 Now on, my Lords, — Fair wonder of thy sex,
 Adieu. We'll strait unto our realm of Mercia.
 Yet first, as was our purpose, thro' this forest

We'll chace the nimble Roebuck ; may the sport
 More please us, than we hope. Earl Athelwold,
 Thou too must join our train. Follow us straight.

Exit Edgar, &c.

A T H E L W O L D.

I do, my Liege. Elfrida, I have much
 For thy lov'd ear, and have but one farewell
 To tell it all — And yet —

E L F R I D A.

Ah loiter not,
 It may enrage. Farewell. Be sure, take heed
 I come not in your talk, avoid ev'n thinking,
 Check ev'n the sighs of absence. Haste, my Earl,
 Oh haste thee, as thou lov'st thy constant wife.

Exit Athelwold.

O R G A R, E L F R I D A, C H O R U S.

O R G A R.

Thy constant Wife! ah, stain of all thy race,
 Degen'rate Girl! Henceforth be Orgar deem'd
 Of soft, and dove-like temper, who could see
 A child of his stoop to such vile abasement,
 And yet forbore just wrath ; forbore to draw
 That blood she had defil'd from her mean veins.
 But sure thou art not mine, some Elve or Faye

Did spirit away my babe, and by curst charms
Thee in her cradle plac'd. Nay hang not on me.
Dry, dry thy tears, they've done their office amply.
Edgar has pardon'd him. No, by my Earldom
I cannot think of majesty thus meanly.
He'll yet avenge it : What if chance he should not?
That stops not me ; I have a heart, an arm,
A sword can do me justice.

ELFRIDA.

Ah! my Lord,
Are you still merciless? Alas, I hop'd—

ORGAR.

What could'st thou hope, Elfrida? could'st thou
think

I e'er would pardon his vile perfidy,
Or thy ignoble softness?

ELFRIDA.

Dearest Father,
Frown not thus sternly on me. I would fain
Touch your relenting soul, fain win your heart
To fatherly forgiveness. For thro' life
I've oft had pleasing proof how that forgiveness
Stoop'd to my fond persuasion. But I fear
Persuasion now has left me. My sad thoughts
Are all on wing, all following Athelwold,
Like unseen ministring spirits :—Pardon, Sir,

That frown shall check me, I'll not mention him ;
 I will but plead for my own weakness, plead
 For that soft sympathy of soul, which you
 Deem base and servile. Base perhaps it might be,
 Were I of bolder sex. But I, alas !——
 Ah pardon me, if Nature stamp'd me Woman ;
 Gave me a heart soft, gentle, prone to pity,
 And very fearful. Fearful, sure, with cause
 At this dread hour, when if one hapless word,
 One sigh break forth unbidden, it may wake
 The King's lull'd rage—What has my phrenzy said ;
 I've wander'd from my meaning. Dearest Virgins,
 My rash tongue more inflames him. O assist me,
 Ye are not thus oppress'd with inward horror :
 Kneel, plead, persuade, convince——

CHORUS.

Alas, my mistress,
 What may a servant's accents do t'appease
 This furious Earl.

ORGAR.

Ye well may spare them : Maidens,
 Know my firm soul's resolv'd, and be my heart
 Abject as Athelwold's, if I forego
 Its honest resolution. Yes, I'll wait
 The Earl's return, and in his own domain

Give him fair combat. I have known the time
 When this good arm had hardihood enough
 For thrice his prowess. What is lost thro' age,
 My just cause shall supply ; and he shall fall
 As did the traytor Oswald, whose false tongue
 Defam'd me to King Athelstan : To the ground
 My sharp lance nail'd the caitiff.

[*Exit Orgar.*

ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

Think, my Lord,
 Will Athelwold, will he enter those lists,
 Where conquest would be parricide ? Alas
 He hears me not. Go, thou obdurate Man.
 A daughter's tears will but the more provoke thee.
 I will not follow him. No, poor Elfrida !
 All thou canst do is here to stand, and weep,
 And feel that thou art wretched.

CHORUS.

Dearest Mistress,
 Refrain this flood of tears, perhaps—

ELFRIDA.

Perhaps !

Ah ! mock me not with hopes.

CHORUS.

We do not mean it:
 For Hope, tho' 'tis pale Sorrow's only cordial,
 Has yet a dull and opiate quality;
 Enfeebling what it lulls. It suits not you,
 For, as we fear —

ELFRIDA.

Do you too fear? Alas!
 I flatter'd my poor soul that all its Fears,
 Were Grief's distemper'd coinage, that my Love
 Rais'd causeless apprehensions, and at length
 Edgar would quite forgive. I do bethink me,
 My joy broke forth too rashly. When they left us,
 His safety was not half secur'd; my pleading
 Was not half heard; I should have follow'd Edgar,
 Claim'd more full pardon, forc'd him to embrace
 My sorrowing Lord.

CHORUS.

We fear that sorrow more
 Than Edgar's rage. We fear his fallen Virtue.
 Self-condemnation works most strongly on him,
 Ev'n to Despondency. Nay, at his pardon,
 No joy flush'd on his cheek; we mark'd him well,
 He shew'd no sign of welcome. No, he took it
 As who should say, "to give me ought but Death
 "Is a poor boon unwish'd and unaccepted."
 Too much we fear he'll do some impious Act—

ELFRIDA.

What, on his life? I thought I had explor'd
 Each various face of danger : this escap'd me.
 How mist I this? It suits his courage highly ;
 Suits too his fixt remorse. — But yet he will not,
 No, Athelwold, thou wilt not kill Elfrida.

CHORUS.

O may his love preserve him : may these shades
 Receive him soon in peace. To this blest end
 You sure should strive to calm your Father's rage,
 At least not suffer him, as now, retir'd
 To brood o'er his revenge. For Solitude,
 Which sooths the tranquil mind, has dread effects
 On wrathful breasts. The same sequester'd Pine,
 Which veils the gurgling Ringdove with its boughs,
 Whets with its knotty trunk the Boar's vext tooth,
 And points each fang with death.

ELFRIDA.

'Tis true, my Virgins ;

Attend me then : I'll try each winning art,
 (Tho' ill such art becomes me) yet I'll aim it. —
 Hark — whence that noise? I heard some hasty
 footsteps.

CHORUS.

O Heavens ! 'tis Edwin.

ELFRIDA, EDWIN, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

Edwin, ah! that look
Bespeaks too well the horror of thy errand.
Tell it me all.

EDWIN.

Alas! —

ELFRIDA.

Nay, do not pause.
Tell it me all. I think it will not kill me.
Repeat each circumstance. I'm ready, Edwin,
Ev'n for the worst.

EDWIN.

Then hear that worst, Elfrida.
Soon as the stag had left yon westward thicket,
The King dismiss his Lords, each sev'ral ways,
To their best sport, bidding Earl Athelwold,
Lord Ardulph, and myself attend his person.
Thus parted from the rest, the Monarch pierc'd
A darkling dell, which open'd in a Lawn
Thick set with elm around. Suddenly here
He turn'd his steed, and cry'd " This place befits
" Our purpose well."

ELFRIDA.

Purpose! what purpose, Edwin?
'Twas predetermin'd then, dissembling tyrant!
How could I trust, or hope.—

EDWIN.

Yet give me hearing:

Thus with a grave composure, and calm eye
 King Edgar spoke. Now hear me, Athelwold,
 Thy king has pardon'd this thy trait'rous act;
 From each committed sin 'gainst Majesty
 Thou stand'st full franchis'd; yet there still remains
 Somewhat to cancel more. As man to man,
 As friend to friend, now, Athelwold, I call thee
 Strait to defend thy life with thy good sword.
 Nay, answer not; defend it gallantly.
 If thy arm prosper, this my dying tongue
 Shall pardon thee, and bless thee. If thou fall'st,
 Thy parting breath must to my right resign
 Elfrida's beauties. At the word, both drew,
 Both fought, but Athelwold's was ill-play'd passion;
 He aim'd his falchion at the Monarch's head,
 Only to leave his own brave breast defenceless.
 And the first stroke of Edgar's rapid sword
 Pierc'd my dear master's heart. He fell to earth,
 And falling, cry'd, " This wound atones for all.
 " Edgar thus full aveng'd will pardon me,
 " And my true wife with chaste, connubial tears
 " Embalm my memory." He smil'd, and dy'd.

ELFRIDA.

Nay, come not round me, Virgins, nor support me:
 I do not swoon, nor weep. I call not heav'n

T'avenge my wretchedness. I do not wish
 This tyrant's hand may wither with cold palsies.
 No, I am very patient. Heav'n is just!
 And, when the measure of his crimes is full,
 Will bare its red right arm, and launce its light'n-
 ings.

Till then, ye elements, rest: and thou, firm Earth,
 Ope not thy yawning jaws, but let this Monster
 Stalk his due time on thine affrighted surface.
 Yes; let him still go on; still execute
 His savage purposes, and daily make
 More widows weep, as I do. Foolish Eyes!
 Why flow ye thus unbidden? What have tears
 To do with grief like mine?

CHORUS.

Help, help, my Sisters,
 To bear her to the castle.

ORGAR, ELFRIDA, EDWIN, CHORUS.

ORGAR.

As I pass,
 Methought I heard a sound of loud lament:
 Elfrida, ha!

ELFRIDA.

Is not my father there?
 Withhold me not, I'll fall at his dear feet.
 O Sir! behold your child thus lowly prostrate;

Avenge her wrongs, avenge your poor Elfrida,
Your helpless widow'd Daughter.

ORGAR.

Widow'd Daughter!

What! is he slain?

ELFRIDA.

Inhospitably butcher'd ;
The Tyrant's savage self—Stand you thus cool?
Where is the Saxon spirit, where the fire
Of Offa's race?—O foolishness of grief!
Alas, I had forgot; had Edgar spar'd him,
That sword, to which my madness call'd for ven-
geance,
Ere long was meant to do the bloody deed,
And make the murder parricide. Have I
No friend to do me right?

ORGAR.

Thou hast, my child,
I am thy friend, thy father. Trust my care.
Edwin, a word. Retire, my dearest Daughter:
Virgins, conduct her in.

ELFRIDA.

My Father, No.
What do you do? I must not be withheld.
I'll go to yon dire grove, and clasp my Husband,
My murder'd Husband. Why restrain me, Sir?

Can my sad eye dart fire thro' his cold breast,
And light up life anew?

ORGAR.

Go, in my child,
And seek Tranquillity.

ELFRIDA.

And seek Tranquillity!
Ah! who will lead me to her darkling cell?
I know her now, she is Death's pale-ey'd sister,
Her Mansion is the murky charnel vault,
Whence oft at midnight by the moon's pale gleam
She sees the neighb'ring Sexton with his spade
Upturn the green sward, delving the dank grave
Of some love-stricken Maid. Yes, lead me thither.

CHORUS.

This way, my dearest Mistress.

ELFRIDA.

Hold, nay, hold;
Croud not around me. Let me pause awhile.
Albina, thou alone shalt join my mis'ry;
I've much to utter to thy friendly ear.
Lead on, thou gentle maid; thy single arm
Shall prop my trembling frame, thy single voice
Speak peace to my afflictions.

[Exit with the principal Virgin.]

ORGAR, EDWIN, SEMICHORUS.

ORGAR.

On your lives,
Virgins, let no disturbing step approach her.
Say, Edwin, (for I guess 'twas you that brought
These tidings hither) where was royal Edgar,
When late you left him?

EDWIN.

At my master's side,
Repentant of the stroke.

ORGAR.

Comes he not back
To Harewood?

SEMICHORUS.

Heav'n forbid! Elfrida's brain
Would madden at the sight.

ORGAR.

Mistake not, Virgins;
I did not mean, at this distressful hour
The King should see my daughter.

SEMICHORUS.

No, for pity,
Do not profane this sabbath of her grief.
O be her sorrow sacred!

O R G A R.

Fear not, Virgins,
 Her peace is my best care, and, to ensure it,
 I'll haste this instant by young Edwin's guidance
 To find the Monarch. Some four miles from
 Harewood

Stands old Earl Egbert's castle, my fast friend.
 With him will I persuade the King to sojourn,
 Till my child's grief abate, that too to speed
 Be it your business, Virgins. Watching ever
 Each happy interval, when your soft tongues
 May hint his praises, till by practice won
 She bear their fuller blazon. Elfrid's welfare
 Requires this friendly office at your hands;
 And Edgar's virtues bear such genuine lustre,
 That Truth itself directs—

[Exit Orgar.]

S E M I C H O R U S.

As Truth directs,
 So only shall we act. This day has shewn
 What dire effects await its violation.
 Strait is the road of Truth and plain,
 And, tho' across the sacred way
 Ten thousand false meanders stray,
 'Tis ours to walk direct,

And, with sage caution circumspect,
Pace slowly thro' the solemn scene.

[The principal Virgin returns.]

CHORUS, SEMICHORUS.

CHORUS.

Has Orgar left the grove?

SEMICHORUS.

He has, my sister.

CHORUS.

Then hear, and aid Elfrida's last resolve,
Who takes the only way stern fate has left
To save her plighted faith for ever pure
To her dead Athelwold.

SEMICHORUS.

Forbid it, Patience;
Forbid it, that submissive Calm of soul,
Which teaches meek-ey'd Piety to smile
Beneath the scourge of Heav'n.

CHORUS.

Ye need not fear it,
She means not self-destruction. Thanks to heav'n,
Huge and o'erbearing as her misery is,
It cannot so obliterate from her breast

The written rule of Duty. Her pure Soul
Means, on the instant, to devote itself
To heav'n and holiness. Assist her strait,
Lest Edgar's presence, and her Father's rage,
Prevent the blest intention. See, she comes.
Kneel on each side, devoutly kneel around her,
And breath some pray'r in high and solemn strains,
That Angels from their thrones of light may hear,
And ratify her vow.

ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

[Elfrida kneels, and the Virgins divide into two Troops.]

SEMICHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear,
Hear from these nether thrones of Light;
And O in golden characters record
Each firm, immutable, immortal word.
Then wing your solemn flight
Up to the heav'n of heav'ns, and there
Hang the conspicuous tablet high,
'Mid the dread records of Eternity.

ELFRIDA.

Hear first, that Athelwold's sad widow swears
To rear a hallow'd Convent o'er the place,
Where stream'd his blood; there will she weep
thro' Life
Immur'd with this chaste throng of Virgins; there
Each day shall six times hear her full-voic'd Choir

Chaunt the slow requiem o'er her martyr'd Lord;
 There too, when Midnight hours with awful gloom,
 She'll rise observant of the stated call
 Of waking Grief, bear the dim livid taper
 Along the winding Isles, and at the Altar
 Kiss ev'ry pale shrine with her trembling lips,
 Press the cold stone with her bent knee, and call
 On fainted Athelwold.

SEMICHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear,
 Hear from these nether thrones of Light,
 And O in golden characters record
 Each firm, immutable, immortal word;
 Then wing your solemn flight
 Up to the heav'n of heav'ns, and there
 Hang the conspicuous tablet high,
 'Mid the dread records of Eternity.

ELFRIDA.

Hear next, that Athelwold's sad widow swears
 Never to violate the holy vow
 She to his truth first plighted; swears to bear
 The sober singleness of Widowhood
 To her cold grave. If from this chaste resolve
 She ev'n in thought should swerve, if gaudy pomp,
 Or flatt'ring greatness e'er should tempt one wish
 To stray beyond this purpose, may that heav'n,

Which hears this vow, punish its violation
As heav'nly justice ought.

CHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear,
Hear from these nether thrones of light,
And O in golden characters record
Each firm, immutable, immortal word.
Then wing your solemn flight
Up to the heav'n of heav'ns, and there
Hang the conspicuous tablet high,
'Mid the dread records of Eternity.

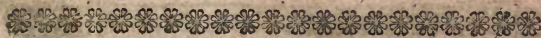
F I N I S.



O R O O N O K O,

A

T R A G E D Y.



OR G O W O K O

TR A G E D Y

THE FATHER-KING

OR G O W O K O

TR A G E D Y

THE FATHER-KING

THE FATHER-KING

THE FATHER-KING

O R O O N O K O,

A

TRAGEDY,

As it is now Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

In DRURY-LANE.

BY

HIS MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

By THOMAS SOUTHERN.

With ALTERATIONS.

—*Quo fata trabunt, virtus secura sequetur.*

LUCAN. lib. 2. v. 287.

Virtus, recludens immeritis mori

Cælum, negatâ tentat iter viâ. HOR. Od. 2. lib. 3.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. BATHURST, at the *Cross-Keys*, in *Fleet-Street*; and the rest of the PROPRIETORS.

MDCC LIX.

O R O W O K O

A
T R A G E D Y

As it is now Acted at the

T H E A T R E - R O Y A L

I n D R U R Y - L A N E .

H I S M A J E S T Y ' S S E R V A N T S .

By T H O M A S S O U T H E R N .
With Alterations .

—*See full title, which forms a separate*
Lucan. lib. 2. v. 287.
Hor. Od. 2. lib. 3.
Cicero, Regulae, lib. 1. c. 1.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. B. Thurst, at the Old-Kent in the
Street; and the rest of the Proprietors.

M D C C L I X .

THE Merit of the tragic Scenes in this Play, has been universally acknowledged ; because their Power has been universally and forcibly felt : The Plot is simple, yet there is a sufficient Number of Events to make the Representation active and busy ; to raise and gratify Expectation ; and to render the Issue interesting and important : The Attention is, throughout, invariably fixed upon the two principal Characters, *Oroonoko* and *Imoinda* ; who are so connected as to make but one Object, in which all the Passions of the Audience, moved by the most tender and exquisite Distress, are concentered.

It was therefore justly regretted, that these Scenes were degraded by a Connexion with some of the most loose and contemptible that have ever disgraced our Language and our Theatre : This Part of *Oroonoko*, if it stood alone, could not with respect to it's mere comic Merit be ranked higher than a Droll for a Fair, where its Immorality ought to prevent its Exhibition ; but as it is connected with the tragic, it is in a still higher Degree preposterous, absurd, and pernicious.

FOR these Reasons, an Attempt is now made to render *Oroonoko* a regular Tragedy of five Acts, in which the Editor proposed to himself the following Plan.

- 1st. To reject all the comic Scenes.
- 2^{dly}. To alter the tragic as little as possible.
- 3^{dly}. To lengthen it, not by Declamation, but Action. And
- 4^{thly}. To make this Action perfectly coincide with the original dramatic Story, as the Addition of foreign Events might raise a new Interest ; and by dividing the Distress necessarily diminish its Force,

IN the Prosecution of this Plan; no new Character has been introduced; but the Parts of *Aboan* and *Hotman*, have been considerably enlarged: *Hotman's* treachery is made an Instrument to produce new Incidents of Fidelity, Generosity, and Affection, between *Aboan* and *Oroonoko*; and several new Scenes are added, to account for *Aboan's* precipitate Attempt to recover his Liberty, and to form and carry on the Conspiracy: Some tender Expostulations of *Imoinda* against the Governor's Importunity, have also been inserted in the first Scene between them, expressing that refined Sensibility which always increases Pity, by at once heightening the Character of the Sufferer and our Idea of the Distress.

A total Alteration has also been made in the musical Part, as it was thought that the Songs supposed to be sung by the Slaves on this Occasion, should, though amorous, be plaintive, the Expression of Beings at once capable of Love, and conscious of a Condition in which all its Delicacies must become the Instruments of Pain.

WHEN the Conduct of the dramatic Action was farther pursued, with the critical Attention which the proposed Alterations made necessary, several Inaccuracies appeared which it was thought proper to remove.

IN the first Scene of the third Act (*Old Edit.* p. 37, and 38.) *Aboan* was represented as suspecting *Hotman* of Treachery, from his Violence; yet at the same Time intimating that something was in Agitation, with sufficient Plainness to enable him, if false, to prevent the Execution of it, by putting the Planters upon their Guard: He says indeed in the same Breath, that he will know him more before he trusts him farther; but after having trusted him so far, a Resolution not to trust

trust him farther could not prevent the Mischief he had Reason to dread : But this is not all ; after *Aboan* has thus determined to trust *Hotman* no farther without farther Trial, we find that without farther Trial he is farther trusted ; for, in the fourth Scene of the same Act (p. 47), *Aboan* suffers *Oroonoko* to disclose his whole Scheme in *Hotman*'s Presence, and even mentions the seizure of the Ship himself ; yet immediately after he has been thus trusted, *Oroonoko* makes an absurd Proposal to discover whether he ought to be trusted or no ; and even after the Suspicions of *Hotman* had been confirmed by Experiment, after *Oroonoko* had declared it to be his Opinion that he would certainly betray them (p. 49, l. 29.) ; and after *Aboan* had provok'd him by an Insult (p. 50, l. 9.), he is trusted with the only Particular that he did not know before, the Time of the Rendezvous (p. 50, l. 10), and no Step is taken to prevent the ill Consequences of his Perfidy ! There seems also to be an Inconsistency in what *Oroonoko* and *Aboan* say to each other, upon the Detection : *Oroonoko* says it was *Hotman*'s Violence made him first suspect him ; but it was *Aboan* only, and not *Oroonoko*, that was Witness of this Violence (p. 37, and 38, l. 15.) : *Aboan*, we know, suspected him from this Violence ; yet *Aboan* now expresses his Wonder that such a Blaze should be without Fire : And, indeed, that there should be Blaze without Fire, was enough to make any Man wonder (See p. 49, l. 17, 18, 19, 20.) Besides, tho' *Aboan* considers *Hotman*'s Violence as a Mark of Treachery, it does not any where appear that his Suspicions were well founded, 'till the Discovery is actually made : We are left to judge of him, wholly from the Trial ; and the Trial, when it is at last made by *Oroonoko*, is such as could only bring his Courage, not his Fidelity, to the Test ; but tho' his Fear only is discovered, yet both *Aboan* and *Oroonoko* infer that he is guilty ; an Impropriety not less manifest than that of making this Trial before the rest of the Conspirators, whose Firmness was certainly endangered by an artful, pathetic,

and exaggerated Representation of the Dangers they would incur.

IN the same Act, tho' *Oroonoko* declares, The Means that lead to Liberty must *not be bloody* (p. 45, l. 5, 6.), yet he resolves to *strike first* (p. 44, l. 24.); it follows therefore, that by not being bloody he can only mean that no Blood shall be shed in Revenge, but such Blood only as the Struggle for Liberty makes necessary; but the Resolution to *strike first*, was an unjustifiable Resolution, as *Oroonoko* himself abundantly proves in this very Conference with *Aboan*; who, being unable to answer his Arguments, works him to his Purpose by alarming his Passions. *Oroonoko* had yet nothing to resent that could justify his taking Arms; he had been wronged only by the Captain; to all others, for ought he knew to the contrary, he had equal and uncommon Obligations; this seems, therefore, to be a Fault in his Conduct; which renders him somewhat less worthy both of Reverence and Pity, than if his Misfortunes had arisen from the Fault of another.

IN this Act, therefore, the following Alterations have been made; *Oroonoko* absolutely refuses to break any Tie of Honour, merely through Fear that others first should break them; *Aboan* is represented as effectually deceived by *Hotman's* Zeal, and in consequence of this Deception as trusting him with the Conspiracy before *Oroonoko* had seen him: *Hotman* is afterwards represented as practising the same Arts upon *Oroonoko*, which his superior Penetration detects; not by alarming his Fears, but by shewing his Consciousness of Guilt; and he makes his Experiment, only as a Proof of *Aboan's* fatal Mistake; not as a Means of avoiding Danger, but as a Demonstration of Danger already incurred: This Alteration, besides obviating the Inconsistency of the Original, produces a new Incident of that Kind which has generally been thought affecting in a great Degree. *Aboan* is overwhelm'd with the Thought of having de-
feated

feated the whole Enterprize upon which the Liberty and Life of his Prince depended, by his Precipitation and Credulity; and *Oroonoko*, tho' his superior Sagacity had detected the Artifice by which his Friend had been deceived to their mutual Ruin, is so far from reproaching him, or aggravating his Failing into a Fault, that he sooths the Anguish of his Mind, and prevents his laying violent Hands on himself: *Hotman* is not made privy to the Time and Place of meeting, and a Resolution is taken between *Oroonoko* and *Aboan* to rendezvous yet earlier than the Time appointed; this preserves them from Despair, and makes it possible that they may get on board the Vessel before *Hotman* has made his Discovery, at least before Measures could be taken to prevent them: Thus a new Situation of Distress is produced, which, if their Hope had never been revived by an Alteration of their Plan, could never have happened; for just at the Crisis, when this Hope was about to be fulfilled, it is suddenly and totally disappointed, by an Account that *Hotman* has perpetrated his Treachery, and that the Governor is in Arms.

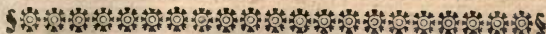
THESE Observations, however, are less intended to solicit Praise, than to prevent Censure; and it is not necessary farther to mention the Alterations, or the Reasons upon which they were made; they will be easily discovered upon a Comparison of the two Copies, if it is ever thought worth while to make it. Some Passages are left out, merely because the Speeches in which they occurred, were too long both for the Audience and the Actor; and one or two, because the Sentiment or Expression was thought exceptionable.

Oroonoko, when he mentions the Father of *Imoinda* to *Blandford* (p. 27, l. 30), calls him "a Man of many Virtues," yet says that he chang'd Christianity for Paganism; a Sentiment, of which the evil Tendency is too manifest to be proved.

Blandford and *Stanmore*, in their Speeches to *Oroonoko*, when they find him chain'd to the Ground (p. 70.), allude to the poetical Fictions of *Cadmus* and the *Titans*; which it was impossible he could understand: And in the Speech of *Oroonoko*, when he surrenders his Sword to *Blandford*, there were two Verses of which the Imagery should never be exhibited (p. 62, l. 26, 27.).

As to the general Tendency or Moral of the whole, it is not much influenced by the Alterations or Additions, except that *Hotman* is not suffered to escape unpunished; and that the same Disposition of *Aboan*, which urged him to propose Methods of Deliverance that were bloody and revengeful, betray'd him into a Folly that subverted all his Hopes, and terminated in the Destruction of those whom he most wished to save.





P R O L O G U E.

THIS Night your tributary Tears we claim;
For Scenes that *Southern* drew; a fav'rite Name!
He touch'd your Fathers' Hearts with gen'rous Woe,
And taught your Mothers' youthful Eyes to flow;
For this he claims hereditary Praise,
From Wits and Beauties of our modern Days;
Yet, Slave to Custom in a laughing Age,
With ribbald Mirth he stain'd the sacred Page;
While Virtue's Shrine he rear'd, taught Vice to mock,
And join'd, in Sport, the Buskin and the Sock:
O! haste to part them! — burst th' opprobrious Band!
Thus *Art* and *Nature*, with one Voice demand:
O! haste to part them! blushing *Virtue* cries; —
Thus urg'd, our Bard this Night to part them tries. —
To mix with *Southern's* though his Verse aspire;
He bows with Rev'rence to the hoary Sire:
With honest Zeal, a Father's Shame he veils;
Pleas'd to succeed, not blushing though he fails:
Fearless, yet humble; for 'tis all his Aim,
That hence you go no worse than here you came:
Let then his Purpose consecrate his Deed,
And from your Virtue your Applause proceed.

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

<i>Oroonoko,</i>	<i>Mr. Garrick.</i>
<i>Aboan,</i>	<i>Mr. Holland.</i>
Lieutenant-Governor of <i>Surinam,</i>	<i>Mr. Burton.</i>
<i>Blandford,</i>	<i>Mr. Palmer.</i>
<i>Stanmore,</i> Captain of the Militia,	<i>Mr. Packer.</i>
<i>Capt. Driver,</i>	<i>Mr. Bransby.</i>
<i>Hotman,</i>	<i>Mr. Blakes.</i>

W O M E N.

<i>Imoinda,</i>	<i>Mrs. Cibber.</i>
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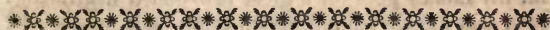
Planters, Indians, Negroes, Men, Women, and Children.

The SCENE *Surinam*, a Colony in the *West-Indies*,
at the Time of the Action of this Tragedy, in the
Possession of the *English*.

O R O O.



ORONOKO.



A C T I.

S C E N E I.

Enter several Planters.

1st Planter.

ELL Neighbours, Captain *Driver* has brought us a fresh Supply — more Slaves.

W *2d Plan.* Aye, and I'm sure we had never more need of 'em.

3d Plan. That's true indeed, and I'm afraid we shall never have less.

4th Plan. Yes, yes; we shall have enough of 'em I warrant you, when they come to breed.

3d Plan. Breed! it's a sign you're a new Comer; Pox on 'em, a parcel of lazy, obstinate, untractable Pagans; — half of 'em are so sulky when they first come, that they won't eat their Victuals when it's set

B

before

before 'em, and a Christian may beat 'em 'till he drops down before he can make 'em eat, if they ha'nt a mind to it.

2d Plan. Beat! aye faith, he may beat those that will eat, long enough before they will work: and what with their starving themselves, and what with the Discipline they require before they will put out their Strength: they die as fast as rotten Sheep, plague on 'em! the poor industrious Planter loses the Money they cost him, and his Ground runs to Ruin for want of their Labour.

1st Plan. Aye, in truth; a Christian Colony has a hard time of it, that is forc'd to deal in this cursed Heathen Commodity: here every time a Ship comes in, my money goes for a great raw-boned negroe Fellow, that has the Impudence to think he is my Fellow-creature, with as much Right to Liberty as I have, and so grows sullen and refuses to work; or for a young Wench, who will howl Night and Day after a Brat or a Lover forsooth, which nothing can drive out of her Head but a Cat-o'-nine-tails; and if Recourse is had to that Remedy, 'tis ten to one but she takes the next Opportunity to pick my Pocket by hanging herself.

4th Plan. Nay, as far as I see yet, the Women are worse than the Men: but 'Squire *Blandford* has got one that they say is not of their complexion.

3d Plan. So they say; but she's of the Breed, I'll warrant her—she's one of the sulky ones—the Lieutenant-Governor has taken a Fancy to her; and yet, wou'd you believe it, she gives herself airs and will scarce speak to him.

2d Plan. I've heard of her; they call her *Clemene*.

1st Plan. *Clemene*, with a Murrain to her; a pretty Name indeed for a mongrel Succabus, which for ought we know may be half Sister to the Devil.

4th Plan. 'Tis a Wonder however that his Honour don't buy her.

3d Plan. She was in a Lot that Mr. *Blandford* drew for the Lord-Governor himself, who you know is expected

pected by the next Ship from *England*, and she cannot be sold without his Consent.

4th Plan. In a Lot drawn for the Lord-Governor?— I don't yet perfectly understand this Method of drawing Lots.

1st Plan. No! why nothing is so easy; the Colony agrees with the Buchaneer to bring a certain Number of Slaves, at so much a Head; and when they come in, we draw for them to prevent Disputes; for as they're all of a Price, every one you know wou'd be for picking out the best, and nobody wou'd consent to take up with what others shou'd have—come along with us to the Market, and you'll see how it is presently; the Slaves are now coming on Shore.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II, *an open Place.*

Enter Lieutenant-Governor Blandford and Stanmore.

Gov. There's no resisting your Fortune, *Blandford*; you draw all the Prizes.

Blan. I draw for our Lord Governor, you know; his Fortune favours me.

Gov. I grudge him nothing this Time; but if Fortune had favour'd me in the last Sale, the fair Slave had been mine; *Clemene* had been mine.

Blan. Are you still in Love with her?

Gov. Ev'ry Day more in Love with her.

Enter Capt. Driver, teased and pulled about by several Planters, Men and Women.

Wom. Here have I six Slaves in my Lot, and not a Man among them; all Women and Children; what can I do with 'em, Captain? Pray consider I am a Woman myself.

1st Plan. I have all Men in mine: Pray, Captain, let the Men and Women be mingled together, for the Good of the Plantation.

2d Plan. Ay, ay, a Man and a Woman, Captain, for the Good of the Plantation?

Capt. Let them mingle together and be damn'd, what care I? Would you have me pimp for the Good of the Plantation?

1st Plan. I am a constant Customer, Captain.

Wom. I am always ready Money to you, Captain.

1st Plan. For that Matter, Mistress, my Money is as ready as yours.

Wom. Pray hear me, Captain.

Capt. Look you, I have done my Part by you; I have brought the Number of Slaves you bargain'd for; if your Lots have not pleas'd you, you must draw again among yourselves.

3d Plan. I am contented with my Lot.

4th Plan. I am very well satisfy'd.

3d Plan. We'll have no drawing again.

Capt. Do you hear, Mistress? you may hold your Tongue: For my Part I expect my Money.

Wom. Captain, no body questions or scruples the Payment: But I won't hold my Tongue; 'tis too much to pray and pay too: One may speak for one's own, I hope.

Capt. Well, what would you say?

Wom. I say no more than I can make out.

Capt. Out with it then.

Wom. I say, Things have not been so fair carried as they might have been. How do I know but you have juggled together in my Absence? You drew the Lots before I came, I'm sure.

Capt. That's your own Fault, Mistress; you might have come sooner.

Wom. Then here's a Prince, as they say, among the Slaves, and you set him down to go as a common Man.

Capt. Why, what should make him worth more than a common Man? He'll not do the more Work for being a Prince; will he?

Gov. Where are the Slaves, Captain? They are long coming.

Blan. And who is this Prince that's fallen to my Lot

Lot for the Lord Governor? Let me know something of him, that I may treat him accordingly; who is he?

Capt. He's the Devil of a Fellow, I can tell you; a Prince every Inch of him: You have paid dear enough for him, for all the Good he'll do you: I was forc'd to clap him in Irons, and did not think the Ship safe neither. You are in Hostility with the *Indians*; they say, they threaten you daily: You had best have an Eye upon him.

Blan. But who is he?

Gov. And how do you know him to be a Prince?

Capt. He is Son and Heir to the great King of *Angola*, a mischievous Monarch in those Parts, who, by his good Will, would never let any of his Neighbours be in quiet. This Son was his General; a plaguy fighting Fellow. I have formerly had Dealings with him for Slaves, which he took Prisoners, and have got pretty roundly by him. But the Wars being at an End, and nothing more to be got by the Trade of that Country, I made bold to bring the Prince along with me.

Gov. How could you do that?

Blan. What! steal a Prince out of his own Country. Impossible!

Capt. 'Twas hard indeed; but I did it. You must know this *Oroonoko* ———

Blan. Is that his Name?

Capt. Ay, *Oroonoko*.

Gov. *Oroonoko*.

Capt. Is naturally inquisitive about the Men and Manners of the White Nations. Because I could give him some Account of the other Parts of the World, I grew very much into his Favour: In return of so great an Honour, you know I could do no less, upon my coming away, than invite him on board me: Never having been in a Ship, he appointed his Time, and I prepared my Entertainment; he came the next Evening, as private as he could, with about some twenty

along with him. The Punch went round ; and as many of his Attendants as would be dangerous, I sent dead drunk on Shore ; the rest we secured ; and so you have the Prince *Oroonoko*.

1st Plan. Gad a mercy, Captain ; there you were with him, i'Faith.

2d Plan. Such Men as you are fit to be employed in public Affairs : The Plantation will thrive by you.

3d Plan. Industry ought to be encouraged.

Capt. There's nothing done without it, Boys. I have made my Fortune this Way.

Blan. Unheard of Villainy !

Stan. Barbarous Treachery !

Blan. They applaud him for't.

Gov. But, Captain, methinks you have taken a great deal of Pains for this Prince *Oroonoko* ; why did you part with him at the common Rate of Slaves ?

Capt. Why, Lieutenant Governor, I'll tell you ! I did design to carry him to *England*, to have show'd him there ; but I found him troublesome upon my Hands, and I'm glad I'm rid of him — Oh, oh, hark, they come.

Black Slaves, Men, Women, and Children, pass across the Stage by two and two ; Aboan, and others of Oroonoko's Attendants, two and two : Oroonoko last of all, in Chains.

Capt. Now, Governor, pray observe him.

Oro. So, Sir, you have kept your Word with me,

Capt. I am a better Christian, I thank you, than to keep it with a Heathen.

Oro. You are a Christian, be a Christian still :
If you have any God that teaches you
To break your Word, I need not curse you more :
Let him cheat you, as you are false to me.
You faithful Followers of my better Fortune,
We have been Fellow-Soldiers in the Field ;

[*Embracing his Friends.*

Now

Now we are Fellow-Slaves. This last Farewel,
Be sure of one Thing that will comfort us,
Whatever World we are next thrown upon
Cannot be worse than this.

[All Slaves go off but Oroonoko.]

Capt. You see what a bloody Pagan he is, Governor; but I took care that none of his Followers should be in the same Lot with him, for fear they should undertake some desperate Action, to the Danger of the Colony.

Oro. Live still in fear; it is the Villain's Curse,
And will revenge my Chains: Fear even me,
Who have no Power to hurt thee. Nature abhors,
And drives thee out from the Society
And Commerce of Mankind, for Breach of Faith.
Men live and prosper but in mutual Trust,
A Confidence of one another's Truth:
That thou hast violated. I have done;
I know my Fortune, and submit to it.

Gov. Sir, I am sorry for your Fortune, and would help it if I could.

Blan. Take off his Chains. You know your Condition; but you are fallen into honourable Hands: You are the Lord Governor's Slave, who will use you nobly: In his Absence it shall be my Care to serve you.

[Blandford applying to him.]

Oro. I hear you, but I can believe no more.

Gov. Captain, I'm afraid the World won't speak so honourably of this Action of yours, as you would have 'em.

Capt. I have the Money, let the World speak and be damn'd; I care not.

Oro. I would forget myself. Be satisfied. *[To Blan.]* I am above the Rank of common Slaves.

Let that content you. The Christian there, that knows me,

For his own sake will not discover more.

Capt. I have other Matters to mind. You have

have him, and much Good may do you with your Prince. [Exit.

The Planters pulling and staring at Oroonoko.

Blan. What would you have there? You stare as if you never saw a Man before, Stand farther off.

[Turns 'em away.]

Oro. Let 'em stare on.

I am unfortunate, but not asham'd
Of being so: No, let the Guilty blush,
The white Man that betray'd me: Honest Black
Disdains to change its Colour. I am ready:
Where must I go? Dispose me as you please,
I am not well acquainted with my Fortune,
But must learn to know it better: So I know, you say,
Degrees make all Things easy.

Blan. All Things shall be easy.

Oro. Tear off this Pomp, and let me know myself;
The slavish Habit best becomes me now.
Hard Fare and Whips, and Chains may overpower
The frailer Flesh, and bow my Body down:
But there's another, nobler Part of me,
Out of your Reach, which you can never tame.

Blan. You shall find nothing of this Wretchedness
You apprehend. We are not Monsters all.
You seem unwilling to disclose yourself:
Therefore for Fear the mentioning your Name
Should give you new Disquiets, I presume
To call you *Cæsar*.

Oro. I am myself; but call me what you please.

Gov. A very good Name, *Cæsar*.

And very fit for his Character.

Oro. Was *Cæsar* then a Slave?

Gov. I think he was; to Pirates too: He was a great Conqueror, but unfortunate in his Friends —

Oro. His Friends were Christians?

Blan. No.

Oro. No! that's strange.

Gov. And murder'd by 'em.

Oro.

Oro. I would be *Cæsar* then. Yet I will live.

Blan. Live to be happier.

Oro. Do what you will with me.

Blan. I will wait upon you, attend, and serve you.

[*Exit with Oroonoko.*]

S C E N E III.

A Grove, a Plantation seen at a little Distance.

Aboan alone.

At length I am alone—but why alone?

My Thoughts are worse Society to me

Than the poor Slaves with whom I'm doom'd to labour—

I cannot bear it—if I turn my View

Backward or forward, round me, or within,

'Tis all Regret, Oppression, and Despair.—

Yet why Despair!—something may yet be done;—

May yet be done—hold—let me most distrust

The flatterer Hope—if she one moment lures me

To patient Suff'rance, from that fatal Moment

Insidious Slumbers steal upon my Virtue—

I shall—distraction! *must* grow tame by Habit—

I must—what else has quench'd in those around me

That Indignation which now choaks my Utterance?

All Hell is in the Thought—my struggle must be now,

This instant Now—precipitation's Wisdom—

Slaves at a distance.

Slav. Hoa! Hoa! Aboan Aboan—

Abo. Hark! here they come—It must, it shall be so
Hackney'd they are in mis'rys new to me,
Like secret Fire that smokeless Embers hide.

Yet still the Love of Liberty must live.

Enter three Slaves.

1st Slav. Here, where are you? come, to work, to work,

2d Slav. You are a Stranger, ign'rant of your Duty;

Or

Or else this Idleness had been chastis'd
With many a smarting Blow.

3d Slav. Aye good Aboan
Come, come with us, for if the Overseer
Ev'n now surprize us——

2d Slav. Hush, I hear his Voice——

1st Slav. No, no, 'tis not he——

Abo. Wou'd he scourge us then?

3d Slav. Wou'd he? Experience soon will tell you
that.

Abo. Has then Experience ever told it you?

3d Slav. Has it? don't ask me—wou'd I could say no?

Abo. You have been beaten then to patient Drudgery.

2d Slav. 'Tis shameful to confess it, yet 'tis true.

Abo. What to confess is shameful, is it not
More shameful still to suffer?

3d Slav. What if it be?

Abo. Then suffer it no longer.

1st Slav. No longer—no, if we knew how to help it.

Abo. Knew how? — suppose a Friend should tell
you how?

They gather eagerly about him.

2d Slav. What say you?

1st Slav. Are there ways?

3d Slav. Can you tell us?

Abo. I see by this Impatience you're not quell'd
Into a torpid tame Insensibility;
I'll tell you then such News as shall revive
Each drooping Virtue, string each Nerve anew.

All Slav. What is it?—what is it?—

Abo. There is among you now a mighty Prince,
Great as a tutelary God in Arms;
Before the Lightening of whose dreaded Sword,
These pale, cold, half-form'd Tyrants that insult ye
Wou'd vanish, like thin Mists before the Sun.

1st Slav. What did he come with you?

Abo. He came with me,
I am myself distinguish'd by his Friendship,
And oft with him have led the Front of Battle.

2d Slav. But how, where——

3d Slav. Is there only you and he ?

Abo. There are six more of high Command about him,

All try'd, all firm, all fit for great Atchievements.

1st Slav. Where are they ?

Abo. The Prince, my Lord, not long since parted from me ;

The rest, not now far off, will soon be found——

When we were parted he embrac'd us all ;

My Friends, says he, “ One thing will comfort us,

“ Whatever World we are thrown next upon

“ Cannot be worse than this ”——

These were my royal Master's Words at parting,

And sure you cannot doubt but they are true.

Shall we then, having nothing worse to fear,

Bear with dull sluggish Patience what we suffer !——

If nothing's worse the Chance is all for gain :——

There can be Danger then in no Attempt ;

And if there was 'twere better still, for Danger

Has always its Equivalent in Glory.

The Slaves look on each other eagerly, as silently asking each other what they think—after a Pause

1st Slav. And will this Prince, and you, and these
your Friends

Assist us to be free ?

Abo. Will you with them

Join Hands in the Attempt ?——

A Cry without at some distance—the Slaves start and seem terrified.

What cry was that ?

2d Slav. 'Tis the Complaint of wretched Slaves,
extorted

By bloody Whips laid on without Remorse,

And without Cause—e'er Night perhaps from us,

And you, such Cry may by such Stripes be forc'd——

Abo. Ye Gods ! and shall we not resist it then !

Slaves. We will——

Abo.

Abo. Your Hands—at Night we meet again.
Come on—now lead me to my Task. [Exeunt.



A C T II.

Enter Oroonoko and Blandford.

Oro. **Y**O U grant I have good Reason to suspect
All the Professions you can make to me.

Blan. Indeed you have.

Oro. The Dog that sold me did profess as much
As you can do—but yet, I know not why——

Whether it is because I'm fall'n so low,

And have no more to fear—that is not it:

I am a Slave no longer than I please.

'Tis something nobler—being just myself,

I am inclining to think others so:

'Tis that prevails upon me to believe you.

Blan. You may believe me.

Oro. I do believe you.

From what I know of you, you are no Fool:

Fools only are the Knaves, and live by Tricks:

Wise Men may thrive without 'em, and be honest.

Blan. They won't all take your Counsel— [Aside.

Oro. You know my Story, and you say you are

A Friend to my Misfortunes: That's a Name

Will teach you what you owe yourself and me.

Blan. I'll study to deserve to be your Friend.

When once our noble Governor arrives,

With him you will not need my Interest:

He is too generous not to feel your Wrongs.

But be assur'd I will employ my Pow'r,

And find the Means to send you Home again.

Oro. I thank you, Sir. — My honest, wretched
Friends!

[Sighing.

Their

Their Chains are heavy: they have hardly found
So kind a Master. May I ask you, Sir,
What is become of them: perhaps I should not.
You will forgive a Stranger.

Blan. I'll enquire,
And use my best Endeavours, where they are,
To have 'em gently us'd.

Oro. Once more I thank you.
You offer every Cordial that can keep
My Hopes alive, to wait a better Day.
What friendly Care can do, you have apply'd.
But Oh! I have a Grief admits no Cure.

Blan. You do not know, Sir——

Oro. Can you raise the Dead?
Pursue and overtake the Wings of Time?
And bring about again the Hours, the Days,
The Years that made me happy?

Blan. That is not to be done.

Oro. No, there is nothing to be done for me.

[Kneeling and kissing the Earth.]

Thou God adored! thou ever glorious Sun!
If she be yet on Earth send me a Beam
Of thy All-seeing Pow'r to light me to her!
Or if thy Sister Goddess has preferr'd
Her Beauty to the Skies, to be a Star;
O tell me where she shines, that I may stand
Whole Nights, and gaze upon her.

Blan. I am rude, and interrupt you.

Oro. I am troublesome:

But pray give me your pardon. My swell'n Heart
Bursts out its Passage, and I must complain.
O! can you think of nothing dearer to me?
Dearer than Liberty, my Country, Friends,
Much dearer than my Life? That I have lost—
The tend'rest, best lov'd, and loving Wife.

Blan. Alas! I pity you.

Oro. Do pity me:

Pity's a-kin to Love; and every Thought

Of that soft Kind is welcome to my Soul.
I would be pity'd here.

Blan. I dare not ask
More than you please to tell me : But, if you
Think it convenient to let me know
Your Story, I dare promise you to bear
A Part in your Distress, if not assist you.

Oro. Thou honest-hearted Man ! I wanted such,
Just such a Friend as thou art, that would sit
Still as the Night, and let me talk whole Days
Of my *Imoinda*. O ! I'll tell thee all
From first to last ; and pray observe me well.

Blan. I will most heedfully.

Oro. There was a Stranger in my Father's Court,
Valu'd and honour'd much : He was a White,
The first I ever saw of your Complexion :
Of many Virtues, and so fam'd in Arms,
He still commanded all my Father's Wars.
I was bred under him. One fatal Day,
The Armies joining, he before me stepp'd,
Receiving in his Breast a poison'd Dart
Levell'd at me ; he dy'd within my Arms.
I've tir'd you already.

Blan. Pray go on.

Oro. He left an only Daughter, whom he brought
An Infant to *Angola*. When I came
Back to the Court, a happy Conqueror,
Humanity oblig'd me to condole
With this sad Virgin for a Father's Loss.
Lost for my Safety. I presented her
With all the Slaves of Battle to atone
Her Father's Ghost. But when I saw her Face,
And heard her speak, I offer'd up myself
To be the Sacrifice. She bow'd and blush'd ;
I wonder'd and ador'd. The Sacred Pow'r,
That had subdu'd me, then inspir'd my Tongue,
Inclin'd her Heart, and all our Talk was Love.

Blan. Then you were happy.

Oro. O ! I was too happy.

I marry'd her: And tho' my Country's Custom
 Indulg'd the Privilege of many Wives,
 I swore myself never to know but her.
 She grew with Child, and I grew happier still.
 O my *Imoinda*! but it could not last.
 Her fatal Beauty reach'd my Father's Ears:
 He sent for her to Court, where, cursed Court
 No Woman comes, but for his am'rous Use.
 He raging to possess her, she was forc'd
 To own herself my Wife. The furious King
 Started at Incest: But grown desperate,
 Not daring to enjoy what he desir'd,
 In mad Revenge, which I could never learn,
 He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,
 Far from my Hopes ever to see her more.

Blan. Most barbarous of Fathers! the sad Tale
 Has struck me dumb with Wonder.

Oro. I have done.

I'll trouble you no farther: Now and then
 A Sigh will have its Way: That shall be all.

Enter Stanmore.

Stan. *Blandford*, the Lieutenant-Governor is gone
 to your Plantation. He desires you would bring the
 Royal Slave with you. The Sight of his fair Mistress,
 he says, is an Entertainment for a Prince; he would
 have his Opinion of her.

Oro. Is he a Lover?

Blan. So he says himself: He flatters a beautiful
 Slave that I have, and calls her Mistress.

Oro. Must he then flatter her to call her Mistress?
 I pity the proud Man, who thinks himself
 Above being in Love; What, tho' she be a Slave,
 She may deserve him.

Blan. You shall judge of that, when you see her, Sir,

Oro. I go with you.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II. *A Plantation.**Lieutenant-Governor following Imoinda.*

Gov. I have disturb'd you, I confess my Fault,
 My fair *Clemene*; but begin again,
 And I will listen to your mournful Song,
 Sweet as the soft complaining Nightingale's.
 While every Note calls out my trembling Soul,
 And leaves me silent, as the Midnight Groves,
 Only to shelter you; sing, sing again,
 And let me wonder at the many Ways
 You have to ravish me.

Imo. O I can weep
 Enough for you, and me, if that will please you.

Gov. You must not weep: I come to dry your Tears,
 And raise you from your Sorrow.

Imo. Can that be,
 When all your Actions and your Looks convince me
 That you wou'd keep me here, still far from those
 For whom the Tears I shed must flow for ever?—

Gov. They must not sure—be all the past forgotten,
 Look forwards now, where better Prospects rise,
 New Pleasures court you, and new Friends invite.

Imo. Alas! can I—I know not what to say—
 Nature has form'd you of a diff'rent Kind,
 Or thus you cou'd not talk; and shou'd I reason
 From what I feel, you wou'd not understand me.

Gov. O! Yes, my Heart has all the soft Sensations,
 Has all that Friendship, and that Love inspires—

Imo. Let your Heart answer for me then, cou'd you,
 Forc'd to some distant Land, unknown, forlorne,
 A Slave, dependant on another's Will,
 Cut off from all that Habit has endear'd,
 Cut off from Friendship, from domestic Joy—
 Could you forget all these!—alas!—they're past ———

[Bursts into Tears.

Gov. O! fair *Clemene*, there is yet a Passion
 Which can obliterate all the Joys and Pains

That

That others have impress'd ; make room for that
 And all I wish is done—look upon me :
 Look with the Eyes of kind indulging Love,
 That I may have full Cause for what I say :
 I come to offer you your Liberty,
 And be myself the Slave. You turn away.

[Following her.]

But every thing becomes you. I may take
 This pretty Hand : I know your Modesty
 Would draw it back : But you will take it ill,
 If I should let it go, I know you wou'd.
 You shall be gently forc'd to please yourself ;
 That you will thank me for.

*[She struggles and gets her Hand from him, then
 he offers to kiss her.]*

Nay if you struggle with me, I must take——

Imo. You may my Life, that I can part with freely.

[Exit.]

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, and Oroonoko to him.

Blan. So, Governor, we don't disturb you, I hope :
 Your Mistress has left you : You were making Love,
 She's thankful for the Honour, I suppose.

Gov. Quite insensible to all I say, and do :
 When I speak to her, she sighs, or weeps,
 But never answers me as I would have her.

Stan. There's something nearer than her Slavery,
 that touches her.

Blan. What do her Fellow-slaves say of her ; can't
 they find the Cause ?

Gov. Some of them, who pretend to be wiser than the
 rest, and hate her, I suppose for being us'd better than
 they are, will needs have it that she is with Child.

Blan. Poor Wretch ! if it be so, I pity her :
 She has lost a Husband, who perhaps was dear
 To her, and then you cannot blame her.

Oro. If it be so, indeed you cannot blame her.

[Sighing.]

Gov. No, no, it is not so : If it be so,

C

I must

I must still love her : And, desiring still,
I must enjoy her.

Blan. Try what you can do with fair Means, and welcome.

Gov. I'll give you ten Slaves for her.

Blan. You know she is our Lord Governor's : But if I could dispose of her, I would not now, especially to you.

Gov. Why not to me ?

Blan. I mean against her Will. You are in love with her ;

And we all know what your Desires would have :
Love stops at nothing but Possession.

Were she within your Pow'r, you do not know
How soon you would be tempted to forget
The Nature of the Deed, and, may be, act
A Violence, you after would repent.

Oro. 'Tis Godlike in you to protect the Weak.

Gov. Fie, fie, I would not force her. Tho' she be
a Slave, her Mind is free, and should consent.

Oro. Such Honour will engage her to consent :
And then, if you're in Love, she's worth the having :
Shall we not see the Wonder ?

Gov. Have a Care ;

You have a Heart, and she has conqu'ring Eyes.

Oro. I have a Heart : But if it could be false
To my first Vows, ever to love again,
These honest Hands should tear it from my Breast,
And throw the Traitor from me. O ! *Imoinda* !
Living or dead, I can be only thine.

Blan. *Imoinda* was his Wife : She's either dead,
Or living, dead to him : Forc'd from his Arms
By an inhuman Father. Another Time
I'll tell you all.

[*To the Gov.*

Stan. Hark ! the Slaves have done their Work ;
And now begins their Evening Merriment.

Blan. The Men are all in love with fair *Clemene*
As much as you, and try their little Tricks

To entertain her, and divert her Sadness.
 May be she is among them : shall we see? *[Exeunt.]*

S C E N E III.

The Scene drawn shews the Slaves, Men, Women and Children upon the Ground, some rise and dance, others sing the following Songs.

Air by a Man.

COME let us be gay, to repine is in vain,
 When our Loss we forget, what we lose we regain;
 Our Toils with the Day are all ended at last,
 Let us drown in the present all thoughts of the past,
 All the future commit to the Powers above,
 Come, give me a Smile as an earnest of Love.

[To a Woman taking her Hand, she rises and comes slowly forward.]

Air by the Woman.

Ah no—it will not, cannot be,
 Love, Love and Joy must still be free;
 The Toils of Day indeed are past,
 And gentle Evening comes at last,
 But gentle Evening comes in vain
 To sooth the Slave from Sense of Pain.

In vain the Song and Dance invite
 To lose Reflection in Delight;

Thy Voice, thy anxious Heart belies,
 I read thy Bondage in thy Eyes:

Does not thy Heart with mine agree?

Man. — Yes, Love and Joy must both be free.

Wom. — Must both be free, for both disdain
 The founding Scourge, and galling Chain:

Man. — 'Tis true, alas! they both disdain
 The founding Scourge, and galling Chain.

Both to- } Love, Love and Joy must both be free,
 gether. } They live not but with Liberty.
[One of the Men comes forward with a Calash, and offers it.]

Second Man.

Come, forget the Cares that vex ye,
 Drink; and nothing can perplex ye,
 Anxious Thoughts at once shall leave ye,
 Doubter, drink and you'll believe me.

[They drink.]

The Governor, Blandford, Stanmore, and Oroonoko enter as Spectators; and while they are drinking, Captain Driver and several Planters enter with their Swords drawn—a Bell rings.

Capt. Where are you, Governor? Make what haste you can

To save yourself and the whole Colony.

I bad 'em ring the Bell.

Gov. What's the Matter?

1st Plan. The *Indians* are come down upon us: They have plunder'd some of the Plantations already, and are marching this Way as fast as they can.

Gov. What can we do against 'em?

Blan. We shall be able to make a Stand, 'till more Planters come in to us.

2d Plan. There are a great many more without, if you would shew yourself, and put us in Order.

Gov. There's no danger of the white Slaves, they'll not stir. *Blandford*, come you along with me: Some of you stay here to look after the black Slaves.

[All go out but the Captain and six Planters, who all at once seize Oroonoko.]

1st Plan. Ay, ay, let us alone.

Capt. In the first Place we secure you, Sir,
 As an Enemy to the Government.

Oro. Are you there, Sir? You are my constant Friend.

1st Plan.

1st Plan. You will be able to do a great deal of Mischief.

Capt. But we shall prevent you: Bring the Irons hither. He has the Malice of a Slave in him, and wou'd be glad to be cutting his Masters Throats. I know him. Chain his Hands and Feet, that he may not run over to 'em. If they have him, they shall carry him on their Backs, that I can tell 'em.

[As they are chaining him, Blandford enters, runs to 'em.]

Blan. What are you doing there?

Capt. Securing the main Chance: This is a Bosom Enemy.

Blan. Away, you Brutes: I'll answer with my Life for his Behaviour; so tell the Governor.

Capt. Plan. Well, Sir, so we will.

[Exeunt Captain and Planters.]

Oro. Give me a Sword, and I'll deserve your Trust.

A Party of Indians enter, hurrying Imoinda among the Slaves; another Party of Indians sustain 'em retreating, followed at a Distance by the Governor with the Planters: Blandford, Oroonoko join 'em.

Blan. Hell and the Devil! they drive away our Slaves before our Faces. Governor, can you stand tamely by, and suffer this? *Clemene*, Sir, your Mistress is among 'em.

Gov. We throw ourselves away, in the Attempt to rescue 'em.

Oro. A Lover cannot fall more glorious, Than in the Cause of Love. He, that deserves His Mistress's Favour, will not stay behind: I'll lead you on, be bold, and follow me.

[Oroonoko, at the Head of the Planters, falls upon the Indians with a great Shout, and beats 'em off.]

Enter Imoinda.

Imo. I'm tost about by my tempestuous Fate,
And no where must have Rest; *Indians, or English!*

Whoever has me, I am still a Slave.
 No matter whose I am, since I'm no more
 My Royal Master's ; since I'm his no more.
 O I was happy ! nay, I will be happy,
 In the dear Thought that I am still his Wife,
 Tho' far divided from him.

[Draws off to a Corner of the Stage.

After a Shout enter the Governor with Oroonoko, Blandford, Stanmore, and the Planters.

Gov. Thou glorious Man ! thou something greater
 sure

Than *Cæsar* ever was ! that single Arm
 Has sav'd us all : Accept our general Thanks.

[All bow to Oroonoko.

And what we can do more to recompense
 Such noble Services, you shall command.

Clemene too shall thank you——she is safe——

Look up, and bless your brave Deliverer.

[Brings Clemene forward, looking down on the Ground.

Oro. Bless me indeed !

Blan. You start !

Oro. O all you Gods !

Who govern this great World, and bring about
 Things strange, and unexpected, can it be ?

Gov. What is't you stare at so ?

Oro. Answer me, some of you, you who have Pow'r,
 And have your Senses free : Or are you all
 Struck thro' with Wonder too ? *[Looking still fix'd on her.*

Blan. What would you know ?

Oro. My Soul steals from my Body thro' my Eyes ;
 All that is left of Life I'll gaze away,
 And die upon the Pleasure.

Gov. This is strange !

Oro. If you but mock me with her Image here :
 If she be not *Imoinda*——

[She looks upon him, and falls into a Swoon, he runs to her.
 Ha ! she faints !

Nay, then it must be she ; It is *Imoinda* ;

My

My Heart confesses her, and leaps for Joy,
To welcome her to her own Empire here.

I feel her all, in ev'ry Part of me.
O! let me press her in my eager Arms,
Wake her to Life, and with this kindling Kiss
Give back that Soul, she only lent to me. [*Kisses her.*

Oro. Imoinda! Oh! thy Oroonoko calls.

Imoinda coming to Life.

Imo. My Oroonoko! Oh! I can't believe
What any Man can say. But, if I am
To be deceiv'd, there's something in that Name,
That Voice, that Face — [*Staring at him.*
O! if I know myself, I cannot be mistaken.
[*Run and embraces Oroonoko.*

Oro. Never here:

You cannot be mistaken: I am yours,
Your Oroonoko, all that you would have,
Your tender loving Husband.

Imo. All indeed
That I would have: my Husband! then I am
Alive, and waking to the Joys I feel:
They were so great, I could not think 'em true
But I believe all that you say to me:
For Truth itself and everlasting Love
Grows in this Breast, and Pleasure in these Arms.

Oro. Take, take me all: Enquire into my Heart,
(You know the Way to ev'ry Secret there)
My Heart the sacred Treasury of Love:
And if, in Absence, I have misemploy'd
A Mite from the rich Store: if I have spent
A Wish, a Sigh, but what I sent to you;
May I be curs'd to wish, and sigh in vain,
And you not pity me.

Imo. O! I believe,
And know you by myself. If these sad Eyes,
Since last we parted, have beheld the Face
Of any Comfort; or once wish'd to see
The Light of any other Heav'n but you,
May I be struck this Moment blind, and lose

Your blessed Sight, never to find you more.

Oro. Imoinda! O! this Separation
Has made you dearer if it can be so,
Than you were ever to me. You appear
Like a kind Star to my benighted Steps,
To guide me on my Way to Happiness:
I cannot miss it now. Governor, Friend;
You think me mad: But let me bless you all,
Who any Way have been the Instruments
Of finding her again. *Imoinda's found!*
And every Thing that I would have in her.

[*Embracing her in the most passionate Fondness.*

Stan. Where's your Mistress now, Governor?

Gov. Why, where most Men's Mistresses are forced
to be sometimes,
With her Husband, it seems: But I won't lose her so.
[*Aside.*

Stan. He has fought lustily for her, and deserves her.
I'll say that for him.

Blan. Sir, we congratulate your Happiness: I do
most heartily. [To Oroonoko.

Gov. And all of us; but how it comes to pass —

Oro. That will require

More precious Time than I can spare you now.

I have a thousand Things to ask of her,

And she as many more to know of me.

But you have made me happier, I confess,

Acknowledge it, much happier, than I

Have Words, or Pow'r to tell you. Captain, you,

Ev'n you, who most have wrong'd me, I forgive.

I will not say you have betray'd me now:

I'll think you but the Minister of Fate,

To bring me to my lov'd *Imoinda* here.

Imo. How, how shall I receive you; how be worthy
Of such Endearments, all this Tenderness?

These are the Transports of Prosperity,

When Fortune smiles upon us.

Oro. Let the Fools,
Who follow Fortune, live upon her Smiles:

To warm, and animate our common Cause,
And make a Body of us, then I would
Do something more than curse.

Abo. That Body set on Foot, would you be one,
A Limb, to lend it Motion.

Hot. I would be
The Heart of it; the Head, the Hand, and Heart:
Would I could see the Day!

Abo. You will do all yourself.

Hot. I would do more
Than I shall speak, but I may find a Time —

Abo. This Spirit pleases me, and I will trust him. —
[*Afide.*

The Time may come to you; be ready for it. —

Enter Blandford.

We're interrupted now—we'll meet anon.

Blan. If there be any one among you here
That did belong to *Oroonoko*, speak,
I come to him,

Abo. I did belong to him. *Aboan* my Name.

Blan. You are the Man I want; pray come with
me. [Exit all but Hotman.

Hotman alone.

Yes, 'tis as I suspected—this *Aboan*
Has form'd some secret Project to revolt;
My well-feign'd zeal has snar'd him, and he'll trust
me:

Then welcome Liberty!—not that I mean
To trust his Cunning, or the Chance of Arms;
I have a nearer, safer Way to Freedom:
I'll learn the Plot, and watch it Step by Step,
'Till on the Verge of Execution—then,
Just then, betray it; 'twill enhance the Merit,
And make Reward more ample and more sure.

[Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

Enter Oroonoko and Imoinda.

Oro. I do not blame my Father for his Love :
 'Twas Nature's Fault that made you like the Sun,
 The reasonable Worship of Mankind ;
 He could not help his Adoration.
 But when I think on his Barbarity,
 That could expose you to so many Wrongs ;
 Driving you out to wretched Slavery,
 Only for being mine ; then I confess
 I wish I could forget the Name of Son,
 That I might curse the Tyrant.

Imo. I will bless him,
 For I have found you here : Heav'n only knows
 What is reserv'd for us : But, if we guess
 The future by the past, our Fortune must
 Be wonderful, above the common Size
 Of Good or Ill ; it must be in Extremes :
 Extremely happy, or extremely wretched.

Oro. 'Tis in our Pow'r to make it happy now.

Imo. But not to keep it so,

Enter Blandford and Aboan.

Blan. My Royal Lord !
 I have a Present for you.

Oro. Aboan !

Abo. Your lowest Slave.

Oro. My try'd and valu'd Friend.
 This worthy Man always prevents my Wants :
 I only wish'd, and he has brought thee to me.
 Thou art surpriz'd : Carry thy Duty there ;

[Aboan goes to Imoinda, and falls at her Feet.
 While I acknowledge mine, how shall I thank you ?

Blan. Believe me honest to your Interest,
 And I am more than paid. I have secur'd
 That all your Followers shall be gently us'd.)

This Gentleman, your chief Favourite, Sir,
Shall wait upon your Person ; while you stay
Among us.

Oro. I owe every thing to you.

Blan. You must not think you are in Slavery.

Oro. I do not find I am.

Blan. Kind Heav'n has miraculously sent
Those Comforts, that may teach you to expect
Its farther Care, in your Deliverance.

Oro. I sometimes think myself, Heav'n is concern'd
For my Deliverance.

Blan. It will be soon ;
You may expect it. Pray, in the mean time,
Appear as chearful as you can among us.
You have some Enemies, that represent
You dangerous, and would be glad to find
A Reason, in your Discontent, to fear :
They watch your Looks. But there are honest Men,
Who are your Friends : You are secur'd in them,

Oro. I thank you for your Caution.

Blan. I will leave you :
And be assur'd, I wish your Liberty. [*Exit Bland.*

Abo. He speaks you very fair.

Oro. He means me fair.

Abo. If he should not, my Lord ?

Oro. If he should not ?

I'll not suspect his Truth : But if I did,
What shall I get by doubting ?

Abo. You secure
Yourself from Disappointment : But besides,
There's this Advantage in suspecting him :
When you put off the Hopes of other Men,
You will rely upon your God-like Self :
And then you may be sure of Liberty.

Oro. Be sure of Liberty ! what dost thou mean ;
Advising to rely upon myself ?
I think I may be sure on't : We must wait :
'Tis worth a little Patience. [*Turning to Imoinda,*

Abo. O my Lord !

Oro.

Oro. What dost thou drive at?

Abo. Sir, another Time

You would have found it sooner: But I see
Love has your Heart, and takes up all your Thoughts.

Oro. And can'st thou blame me?

Abo. Sir, I must not blame you.

But, as our Fortune stands, there is a Passion
(Your Pardon, Royal Mistress, I must speak)
That would become you better than your Love:
A brave Resentment; which inspir'd by you,
Might kindle and diffuse a gen'rous Rage
Among the Slaves, to rouze and shake our Chains;
And struggle to be free.

Oro. How can we help ourselves?

Abo. I knew you when you wou'd have found a Way:
How, help ourselves! the very *Indians* teach us:
We need but to attempt our Liberty,
And we carry it. We have Hands sufficient,
Double the Number of our Master's Force,
Ready to be employ'd. What hinders us
To set 'em then at Work? We want but you,
To head our Enterprize, and bid us strike.

Oro. What would you do?

Abo. Cut our Oppressors Throats.

Oro. And you would have me join in your Design
Of Murther?

Abo. It deserves a better Name:
But be it what it will, 'tis justify'd
By Self-defence, and natural Liberty.

Oro. I'll hear no more on't.

Abo. I am sorry for't.

Oro. Nor shall you think of it!

Abo. Not think of it!

Oro. No, I command you not.

Abo. Remember, Sir,

You are a Slave yourself, and to command
Is now another's Right. Not think of it!
Since the first Moment they put on my Chains,
I've thought of nothing but the Weight of 'em,

And

And how to throw 'em off: Can yours sit easy?

Oro. I have a Sense of my Condition,
As painful, and as quick, as yours can be.
I feel for my *Imoinda* and myself;
Imoinda, much the tenderest Part of me.
But, tho' I languish for my Liberty,
I would not buy it at the Christian Price
Of black Ingratitude: They shall not say,
That we deserv'd our Fortune by our Crimes.
Murder the Innocent!

Abo. The Innocent!

Oro. These Men are so, whom you would rise against,
If we are Slaves, they did not make us Slaves;
But bought us in the common Way of Trade:
As we have done before 'em, bought and sold
Many a Wretch, and never thought it wrong.
They paid our Price for us, and we are now
Their Property, a Part of their Estate,
To manage as they please. Mistake me not,
I do not tamely say, that we should bear
All they could lay upon us: But we find
The Load so light, so little to be felt,
(Considering they have us in their Pow'r,
And may inflict what Grievances they please)
We ought not to complain.

Abo. My Royal Lord!
You do not know the heavy Grievances,
The Toils, the Labours, weary Drudgeries,
Which they impose; Burdens more fit for Beasts,
For senseless Beasts to bear, than thinking Men.
Then if you saw the bloody Cruelties
They execute on every slight Offence;
Nay, sometimes in their proud, insulting Sport,
How worse than Dogs they lash their Fellow Creatures;
Your Heart would bleed for 'em. Oh! could you know
How many Wretches lift their Hands and Eyes
To you for their Relief!

Oro. I pity 'em,
And wish I could with Honesty do more.

Abo.

Abo. You must do more, and may, with Honesty,
O Royal Sir, remember who you are,
A Prince, born for the Good of other Men :
Whose God-like Office is to draw the Sword
Against Oppression, and set free Mankind :
And this I'm sure you think Oppression now.
What tho' you have not felt these Miseries,
Never believe you are oblig'd to them :
They have their selfish Reasons, may be, now,
For using you so well : But there will come
A Time, when you must have your Share of 'em.

Oro. You see how little Cause I have to think so :
Favour'd in my own Person, in my Friends ;
Indulg'd in all that can concern my Care,
In my *Imoinda's* soft Society. [*Embracing her.*]

Abo. And therefore would you lie contented down
In the Forgetfulness, and Arms of Love,
To get young Princes for 'em ?

Oro. Sayst thou ! ha !

Abo. Princes, the Heirs of Empire, and the last
Of your illustrious Lineage, to be born
To pamper up their Pride, and be their Slaves ?

Oro. *Imonida!* save me, save me from that Thought.

Imo. There is no Safety from it : I have long
Suffer'd it with a Mother's labouring Pains ;
And can no longer. Kill me, kill me now,
While I am blest, and happy in your Love ;
Rather than let me live to see you hate me :
As you must hate me : me, the only Cause,
The Fountain of these flowing Miseries.

Oro. Shall the dear Babe, the eldest of my Hopes,
Whom I begot a Prince, be born a Slave ?
The Treasure of this Temple was design'd
T' enrich a Kingdom's Fortune : Shall it here
Be seiz'd upon by vile unhallow'd Hands,
To be employ'd in Uses most profane ?

Abo. In most unworthy Uses ; think of that ;
And while you may, prevent it. O my Lord,
Rely on nothing that they say to you.

They

They speak you fair, I know, and bid you wait:
 But think what 'tis to wait on Promises,
 And Promises of Men who know no Tie
 Upon their Words, against their Interest:
 And where's their Interest in freeing you?

Imo. O! where indeed, to lose so many Slaves?

Abo. Nay, grant this Man, you think so much your
 Friend,

Be honest, and intends all that he says;
 He is but one; and in a Government,
 Where, he confesses, you have Enemies,
 That watch your Looks. What Looks can you put on,
 To please these Men, who are before resolv'd
 To read 'em their own way? Alas! my Lord,
 If they incline to think you dangerous,
 They have their knavish Arts to make you so:
 And then who knows how far their Cruelty
 May carry their Revenge?

Imo. To every thing
 That does belong to you, your Friends, and me;
 I shall be torn from you, forced away,
 Helpless and miserable: Shall I live
 To see that Day again?

Oro. That Day shall never come.

Abo. I know you are persuaded to believe
 The Governor's Arrival will prevent
 These Mischiefs, and bestow your Liberty:
 But who is sure of that? I rather fear
 More Mischiefs from his coming. He is young,
 Luxurious, Passionate, and amorous:
 Such a Complexion, and made bold by Power,
 To countenance all he is prone to do,
 Will know no Bounds, no Law against his Lusts.
 If, in a Fit of his Intemperance,
 With a strong Hand he shall resolve to seize,
 And force my Royal Mistress from your Arms,
 How can you help yourself?

Oro. Ha! thou hast rous'd
 The Lion in his Den, he stalks abroad,

And

And the wide Forest trembles at his Roar.
 I find the Danger now: My Spirits start
 At the Alarm, and from all Quarters come
 To man my Heart, the Citadel of Love.
 Is there a Power on Earth to force you from me?
 And shall I not resist it?

Now I am fashion'd to thy Purpose: Speak,
 What Combination, what Conspiracy,
 Would'st thou engage me in? I'll undertake
 All thou would'st have me now for Liberty,
 For the great Cause of Love and Liberty.

Abo. Now, my great Master, you appear yourself.
 And since we have you join'd in our Design,
 It cannot fail us. I have muster'd up
 The choicest Slaves, Men who are sensible
 Of their Condition, and seem most resolv'd:
 They have their several Parties.

Oro. Summon 'em,
 Assemble 'em: I will come forth and shew
 Myself among 'em: if they are resolv'd,
 I'll lead their foremost Resolutions.

Abo. I have provided those will follow you.

Oro. With this Reserve in our Proceedings still,
 The Means that lead us to our Liberty
 Must not be bloody — no — must not be bloody —
 Whate'er the Rage of Passion may suggest.
 'Tis wrong, 'tis base to break the Ties of Honour,
 Merely through Fear that others first shou'd break
 them.

Abo. In Self-Defence, my Lord —

Oro. I know, I feel,
 All thou can'st say, and more—is there no way? [*Pauses*
 Ye Gods! 'tis Inspiration! what a Thought!
 The very Ship that brought, that made us Slaves,
 Swims in the River still—we'll seize on that,
 And not a Life shall fall —

Abo. And shall we then
 Desert our honest, brave, unhappy Friends —!
 Blast all their Hopes —

Oro. O! no, we'll go together;
Not one Associate shall be left behind.

Abo. Why farewell then Revenge—it shall be so.—
We shall expect you, Sir—

Oro. You shall not long.

[*Exeunt Oroonoko and Imoinda at one Door,
Aboan at another.*]

S C E N E III.

Enter several Slaves, Conspirators!

1st Slav. 'Tis about the Time now, he'll be here
soon.

2d Slav. Well, but what are we to do?

1st Slav. To do! why we are to be free;

2d Slav. Aye! 'twas lucky this *Aboan* came among
us; when I look at him, and hear him talk, I think
I'm free already.

3d Slav. Why aye, to be sure; such Men as he may
do much.

2d Slav. Why we were all such Men, 'till Slav'ry
broke us.

But what is the Project?

3d Slav. Why we shall hear, we shall hear.

1st Slav. Aye, let *Aboan* alone; I'll warrant he'll
put us in a Way.

2d Slav. There's *Hotman* too; did you hear how he
fir'd, when our Tyrants ran away and left us to the
Indians.

1st Slav. Did I? aye—*Hotman*, in my Opinion, has
as much Spirit as *Aboan*—here they are, coming to-
gether; let us draw back a little: See how earnestly
they talk; don't let us interrupt them.

[*They retire to the Back of the Stage.*]

Enter Hotman and Aboan.

Abo. This is his Scheme; I left him but this Mo-
ment.

Hot.

Hot. I like it not; a glorious Feat indeed,
For Souls of Fire, provok'd by burning Wrongs,
To seize a Ship by Night and steal away,
Our useless Weapons slumb'ring in the Sheath.
Confusion! and our Suff'rings unreveng'd.

Abo. Indeed I thought of more; but is not Freedom,
Without the Chance of Contest, worth Acceptance?

Hot. I know not—to those frigid Clods, perhaps;
To our pale Lords, who only dare to strike
Whom others bind, it might—but not to me—
By all my Wrongs, I thirst for more than Freedom.

Abo. Thy noble Ardour might e'en warm the Dead?
We'll try once more it's Pow'r on *Oroonoko*——
But soft, here are our Friends, and as I think
At Distance comes the Prince—it must be he——

Turning to the Slaves.] Welcome, my Friends, the Prince
is of your Party,
And has engaged to make your Cause his own—
See where he comes ——

Enter Oroonoko.

Here are our Friends, my Lord,
Who ask but your Concurrence to be free.

Oro. If to all these I am the Means of Freedom,
'Tis well I was a Slave—'tis well that here
Iv'e learnt the Wrongs you suffer.

Hot. 'Tis better not to be, than thus to suffer.

Abo. To die at once, than leave our wretched Off-
spring

Heirs of the Chains and Scourges that ——

Oro. No more ——

My Friend here tells me, you have well resolv'd,

[To the Slaves.

To make one glorious Effort to be free:
To risk your Lives, and all the threefold Woes
That would attend our unsuccessful Contest.

[The Slaves look on each other, and answer nothing.]

Hot. (clamourously) All, all we risk for Freedom —
and *Revenge!*

[Oroonoko turns quick, and looks earnestly at Hotman.]

Oro. (after a Pause) 'Tis well, 'tis great! — *(turning to the rest)* but I have found the Means

To gain our Purpose by a safer way —

Hot. (interrupting) A safer! — let him talk of safer ways

Who holds his Life more dear than great Revenge.

[Oroonoko turns hastily again, and looks at Hotman; fixing his Eyes sometime upon him, without speaking; Hotman at length shews some Signs of Confusion; Oroonoko then turns and speaks to Aboan.]

Oro. Is this the Man whose Zeal you prais'd so much?

Abo. It is —

Hot. (more confus'd) They whisper; yes, I am suspected;

I must talk louder still —

[Aside.]

Oro. (still eyeing Hotman) And is he trusted with the whole Design?

Abo. He is, my Lord.

Oro. The Marks of Guilt are on him.

Abo. Not so, my Lord —

Oro. Whence his Confusion, then, to meet my Eye?

Abo. Whence his Confusion now, suppose him false?

Oro. Whence! from the Consciousness of Falshood here,

That which makes Villains start at their own Shadow,
That made him fear my Eye, though it could reach
No farther than the Covering of his Heart —

Ev'n now he trembles, and a sickly Hue
Steals on his Cheeks —

Abo. It does — yet try him farther.

Oro. To try him now he's trusted, boots us nothing.

Abo. Do it, if only to restore our Hope,

Or end the Torments of Suspence —

Oro.

Oro. I will——

Your Zeal, my Friend, I honour; but you know——
[To Hotman.

Hot. That nobler Hopes have set my Soul on Fire,
Than just to steal a Ship, and run away——
If I consent to this, ye Gods! ——

[He affects to speak this loud, but his Voice falters
through his Fear.

Oro. If you do not consent, you will not sure——

Hot. I will not what?—Who is there that suspects
me? [In a great Confusion.

[Oroonoko looks at Aboan, then turns again to
Hotman.

Oro. Suspects, my Friend. Of what should we sus-
pect you?

Abo. (*hastily*) By Heav'ns, if I suspected any present
Of a perfidious View to blast our Hopes,
This Dagger here at once should make him faithful.

[Hotman, staring, attempts to speak; but is over-
come by his Confusion and Terror.

Oro. (*to Aboan*) What think you now?

Abo. By all my Fears, a Coward and a Traytor.

Oro. He'll certainly betray us.

Abo. That he shall not;

For what I swore, I'll do——

Oro. What wilt thou do?

Abo. I'll stop his Mouth before you; stab him here,
And then let him inform.

[Going to stab Hotman, Oroonoko holds him;
Hotman, who keeps his Eye upon them, per-
ceives it with extreme Confusion, and after
some irresolute Gestures steals off unperceiv'd.

Oro. Thou art not mad——

Abo. I wou'd secure ourselves.

Oro. It shall not be this way, it cannot be;
To murder him, is to alarm the rest.

[Turns about and misses Hotman
What, is he gone! ——

Abo. (to the Slaves) Is *Hotman* gone?—

Slav. *Hotman*, my Lord, is gone; but doubt him not.

The stern enquiring Look of Majesty,
We feel its Pow'r, will strike the Mind with Awe:
He dar'd to differ, Sir: but when oppos'd,
[*To Oroonoko.*
He felt, confus'd, the Diff'rence of his State—

Oro. Why be it so—

My Fellow-sufferers, and worthy Friends;
To-morrow, early as the breaking Day,
We rendezvouz behind the Citron Grove:
'Till then, farewell—

[*Exeunt Slaves, and Aboan is following them.*

Oro. Aboan!

Abo. My Lord.

Oro. 'Twas better not to trust them with our Fears,
Yet let them meet at a more early Time;
Within this Hour—and then, tho' *Hotman's* false,
We may succeed before we are betray'd—

Abo. We may—I'll after them, and do it.

[*Ex. severally.*



A C T IV.

S C E N E, *the Governor's House.*

The Governor and Hotman.

Gov. To seize the Ship, say you?

Hot. Ev'n so, my Lord.

Gov. And at what Hour?

Hot. The Hour I cannot tell.

Gov. Was you not trusted then?

Hot. I was, my Lord; but he they call the Prince—

Gov. What, *Oroonoko*?

Hot. The same, my Lord; a bloody-minded Fellow;
He

He and another, took it in their Heads
To think I was not quite the Rogue I seem'd,
And if I had not left them wou'd have stabb'd me.

Gov. Indeed——well we must be before-hand with
'em——

Your honest Service to the Government
Shall be rewarded with your Liberty ;
Let's see——

[*Pauses.*

Hot. (aside) Cou'd I have work'd 'em up to farther
Mischief,

My Wages had been more. [*Retiring.*

Gov. Here, *Hotman*——hark ye,
Let Captain *Driver* come to me this Moment——

[*Exit Hotman.*

Why this is just the Thing I wou'd have wish'd ;
The Laws now take this *Oroonoko* off,
And leave *Imoinda* mine—the Ship secur'd,
His Party will desert him, and with Ease
I then may seize my Prey.—Who waits without?—

Enter Servant.

Go see the Guard be doubled ; bid the Centry
Stand to their Arms ; let Captain *Stanmore* know
He must attend me here on instant Business.

[*Exit Servant.*

Enter Captain Driver.

Captain, what Hands have you on board To-night ?

Capt. Not many ; but enough to do the Business—
I learnt it from the Slave I met below.

Gov. I sent him, Sir——

Capt. I know it, Governor ; and I have sent him
With Orders that the Ship shou'd weigh, and stand
From Shore ; 'tis doing, Sir, e'er now.

Gov. Your Crew then, Captain, are not all on
board ?

Capt. No, no ; I'll send them Orders to be ready ;
They'll do for your Prince *Oroonoko* yet.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Here's Captain Stanmore, Sir——

Gov. I'll come——

[Exit Servant.]

Well, Captain, I'll expect you; I shall order
All the Militia under Arms directly,
Here on the Platform.

Capt. You need not fear me.

[Exit severally.]

SCENE II, *the Citron-Grove; Moonlight.*

*Enter Oroonoko, Aboan, Imoinda, Slaves, Women,
and Children following.*

Oro. Come on my Friends! see where the rising
Moon

Now shines upon our Purpose! let our March
At once be swift and silent, like her Course;
The Ship surpriz'd, we triumph without Conflict,
Nor mark our Way to Liberty with Blood.

*[As Oroonoko is leading them out, a Slave enters
and prostrates himself before Oroonoko.]*

Slav. My Lord, my Prince——

Oro. What would'st thou say? be brief; stop us not.

Slav. The Villain, *Hotman.*

Abo. Ah!

Oro. Well, what of him?—take Courage—what of
him?

Slav. My Lord, I fear he has betray'd us.

Oro. Why?

Slav. From our last Rendezvous, my Lord, e'en now
I watch'd him to the Governor's; but there
He stay'd not long; I saw as he came out
He spoke to Captain *Driver*, and from him,
I watch'd him still, he hasted to the Ship,
Which, now unmoor'd, lies farther from the Shore;
The Captain and his Crew are up in Arms,
All the Militia out, the Place alarm'd:
They'll soon be here——

Oro. Why we must meet 'em then ; the iron Hand
Of stern Necessity, is now upon us ;
And from the Rack, she drives us to our Swords.

[*Draws.*

The Women and the Children fall behind,
Unfit for Dangers, such as now approach us.
What will become of them !

[*Aboan, who during this Scene expresses the utmost Anguish of Mind by his Gestures and Deportment, at length comes forward ; and prostrating himself before Oroonoko, takes his Foot and sets it upon his Head.*

Oro. Forbear—we're born to Error ; let me raise thee——

I know thee faithful, therefore blame thee not.

Abo. O ! my dear Lord, my Heart drops Blood to think

My hasty eager fond Credulity
Should let that Slave's false seeming thus undo us——

Oro. Name it no more——

Abo. 'Tis lost—'tis ruin'd—and by me ; but this—
[*He suddenly draws a Dagger, and offers to stab himself ; but Oroonoko lays hold of his Hand.*

Oro. Hold ; now you wrong my Design : thus far
Tho't only err'd ; but to desert me now,
[*Wresting the Dagger from him.*

Wou'd be a Crime indeed—I need thy Help.

[*Turning to Imoinda.*] Imoinda, you must not expose yourself :

Retire, my Love ; I almost fear for you.

Imo. I fear no Danger ; Life, or Death, I will
Enjoy with you.

Slav. (*alarm'd*) They come, they come—I see 'em ;
they're upon us.

Oro. (*putting himself before Imoinda*) My Person is
your Guard.

[*Enter the Governor, with Hotman and his Rabble ; Captain Stanmore and his Men.*

Abo.

Abo. There is the Villain that betray'd our Cause;
His Life is due to me.——— *[Advancing.]*

Oro. Hold, you; and you who come against us, hold;
I charge you in a general Good to all,
And wish I could command you, to prevent
The bloody Havock of the murd'ring Sword,
I would not urge Destruction uncompell'd:
But if you follow Fate, you find it here.
Who first advances———

Enter the Captain, with his Crew.

Capt. Here, here, here they are, Governor:
What, seize upon my Ship!
Come, Boys, fall on———

[Advancing first, Oroonoko kills him.]

Oro. Thou art fall'n indeed;
Thy own Blood be upon thee.

Gov. Rest it there.

He did deserve his Death. Take him away.

[The Body remov'd.]

You see, Sir, you, and those mistaken Men,
Must be our Witnesses, we do not come
As Enemies, and thirsting for your Blood.
If we desir'd your Ruin, the Revenge
Of our Companion's Death had push'd it on.
But that we overlook, in a Regard
To common Safety, and the public Good.

Oro. Regard that public Good: Draw off your Men,
And leave us to our Fortune: We're resolv'd.

Gov. Resolv'd! on what? your Resolutions
Are broken, overturn'd, prevented, lost:
What Fortune now can you raise out of 'em?
Nay, grant we should draw off, what can you do?
Where can you move? What more can you resolve?
Unless it be to throw yourselves away.
Famine must eat you up, if you go on.
You see our Numbers could with Ease compel
What we request: And what do we request?

Only

Only to save yourselves.

[The Women, with their Children, gathering about the Men.]

Oro. I'll hear no more.

Gov. To those poor Wretches, who have been seduc'd
And led away, to all, and ev'ry one,
We offer a full Pardon——

Oro. Then fall on. *[Preparing to engage.]*

Gov. Lay hold upon't, before it be too late,
Pardon and Mercy.

[The Women clinging about the Men, they leave Oroonoko, and fall upon their Faces, crying out for Pardon.]

Slaves. Pardon, Mercy, Pardon.

Oro. Let 'em go all. Now, Governor, I see,
I own the Folly of my Enterprize.

The Rashness of this Action; and must blush
Quite through this Veil of Night, a whitely Shame,
To think I could design to make those free,
Who were by Nature Slaves; Wretches, design'd
To be their Masters Dogs, and lick their Feet.
We were too few before for Victory,
We're still enow to die:

*[To Imoinda, Aboan,
and his Friends.]*

Enter Blandford.

Gov. Live, Royal Sir;
Live, and be happy long on your own Terms;
Only consent to yield, and you shall have
What Terms you can propose, for you, and yours.

Oro. Consent to yield! Shall I betray myself?

Blan. I'm glad you have proceeded by fair Means,
[To the Governor.]

I came to be a Mediator.

Gov. Try what you can work upon him.

Oro. Are you come against me too?

Blan. Is this to come against you?

[Offering his Sword to Oroonoko.]

Unarm'd

Unarm'd to put myself into your Hands?
I come, I hope, to serve you.

Oro. You have serv'd me ;
I thank you for't : And I am pleas'd to think
You were my Friend, while I had need of one :
But now 'tis past ; this Farewel, and be gone.

[Embraces him.]

Blan. It is not past, and I must serve you still.
I would make up these Breaches which the Sword
Will widen more, and close us all in Love.

Oro. I know what I have done, and I should be
A Child to think they ever can forgive :
Forgive ! Were there but that, I would not live
To be forgiven : Is there a Power on Earth,
That I can ever need Forgiveness from ?

Blan. You shall not need it.

Oro. No, I will not need it.

Blan. You see he offers you your own Conditions,
For you, and yours.

Oro. Must I capitulate ?
Precariously compound, on stinted Terms,
To save my Life ?

Blan. Sir, he imposes none.
You make 'em for your own Security.
If your great Heart cannot descend to treat,
In adverse Fortune, with an Enemy ;
Yet sure your Honour's safe, you may accept
Offers of Peace and Safety from a Friend.

Gov. He will rely on what you say to him : *[To Blan.]*
Offer him what you can, I will confirm
And make all good : Be you my Pledge of Trust.

Blan. I'll answer with my Life for all he says.

Gov. Ay, do, and pay the Forfeit if you please. *[Aside.]*

Blan. Consider, Sir, can you consent to throw
That Blessing from you, you so hardly found, *[Of Imo.]*
And so much valu'd once ?

Oro. *Imoinda !* Oh !
'Tis she that holds me on this Argument
Of tedious Life : I could resolve it soon,

Were

Were this curs'd Being only in Debate.
 But my *Imoinda* struggles in my Soul :
 She makes a Coward of me, I confess :
 I am afraid to part with her in Death ;
 And more afraid of Life to lose her here,

Blan. This Way you must lose her ; think upon
 The Weakness of her Sex, made yet more weak
 With her Condition, requiring Rest,
 And soft indulging Ease, to nurse your Hopes,
 And make you a glad Father.

Oro. There I feel
 A Father's Fondness, and a Husband's Love.
 They seize upon my Heart, strain all its Strings
 To pull me to 'em from my stern Resolve.
 Husband and Father ! all the melting Art
 Of Eloquence lives in those soft'ning Names.
 Methinks I see the Babe, with Infant Hands,
 Pleading for Life, and begging to be born :
 Shall I forbid his Birth ? Deny him Light ?
 The heavenly Comforts of all cheering Light ?
 These are the Calls of Nature, that call loud ;
 They will be heard, and conquer in their Cause :
 He must not be a Man, who can resist 'em.
 No, my *Imoinda* ! I will venture all
 To save thee, and that little Innocent :
 The World may be a better Friend to him,
 Than I have found it. Now I yield myself :

[*Gives up his Sword.*]

The Conflict's past, and we are in your Hands.

[*Several Men get about Oroonoko and Aboan,
 and seize them.*]

Gov. So you shall find you are. Dispose of them,
 As I commanded you.

Blan. Good Heav'n forbid ! you cannot mean—

Gov. This is not your Concern.

[*To Blandford, who goes hastily to Stanmore.*]

Blan. For Heav'n's Sake use your Int'rest with him,
Stanmore.

Gov.

Gov. I must take care of you. [To Imoinda.

Imo. I'm at the End

Of all my Care: Here will I die with him. [Holding Oro.

Oro. You shall not force her from me [He holds her.

Gov. Then I must. [They force her from him.

Try other Means, and conquer Force by Force:

Break, cut off his Hold, bring her away.

Stan. Dear Governor, consider what you do.

Gov. Away——

Imo. I do not ask to live, kill me but here.

Oro. O bloody Dogs! Inhuman Murderers!

[Imoinda forc'd out of one Door by the Governor
and others. Oroonoko and Aboan hurried
out of another. [Exeunt.

Remain Blandford and Stanmore.

Blan. Astonishment confounds me, what a Wretch!
But he shall not betray me to the Pledge
And forfeit of my Honour thus; I'll force——

Stan. No, tho' Resentment's just use gentle Means,
To brave him wou'd ensure the Captive's Death:

Blan. I cannot brook the Wrong, to make my Faith
The Pander to his Cowardice and Lust!

Stan. 'Tis vile indeed, but yet let justice wait,
His Pow'r will not be long, and when your Blow
Will only reach to him, then strike, strike home;
But now, if thou woudest save——

Blan. O! I would save
At my own Life's Expence the trusting, honest,
Deceiv'd, betray'd, insulted Oroonoko:

Stan. Then hear me, stoop for once to Intercession,
We may support it with such weighty Reasons,
That he shall not say nay, he shall not dare.

Blan. Not dare! you see he has already dar'd
A Crime that might draw down the Wrath of Heav'n
By Miracle to blast him:

Stan. Yes, but those
Who fear not Heav'n, are most afraid of Men.

Blan. Yet my Resentment he has brav'd ev'n now.

Stan.

Stan. He has, but in the Tumult of his Passion,
With his Dependants round him, before whom
To have been over rul'd had hurt his Pride;
Trust me, to-morrow to your Face and mine
He will not dare to vindicate the Wrong.

Blan. You shall prevail—I'll meet you at his House
Early to-morrow.

Stan. Your Hour?

Blan. At Eight.

Stan. I'll meet you there.

[*Exeunt severally.*]



A C T V.

S C E N E I.

Enter Governor, with Blandford and Stanmore.

Blan. **H**A V E you no Reverence of future Fame?
No Awe upon your Actions, from the
Tongues,
The cens'ring Tongues of Men, that will be free?
If you confess Humanity, believe
There is a God, to punish or reward
Our Doings here: do not provoke your Fate.
The Hand of Heav'n is arm'd against these Crimes,
With hotter Thunderbolts, prepar'd to shoot,
And nail you to the Earth, a sad Example;
A Monument of faithless Infamy.

Gov. Tell me no more of Fame, and breach of Faith,
The publick Good requires that he should die.

Stan. The publick Good must totter, when the Base
Is Fraud, and Craft, and prostituted Honour.

Blan. When Guilt is sanctified by bold Pretences
That Wrong is in its Consequences right,
The Bond that holds Society together

Is broken! Rule and Order at an End,
And Anarchy must desolate the World.

Gov. The Planters hold not these Opinions, Sir,
They think it well that Bloodshed was prevented
By any Means, and now are clamorous
To have this Slave cut off—

Blan. We are not sure, so wretched, to have these,
The Rabble, judge for us: The changing Croud,
The arbitrary Guard of Fortune's Power,
Who wait to catch the Sentence of her Frowns,
And hurry all to Ruin she condemns.

Stan. So far from farther Wrongs, that 'tis a Shame
He should be where he is. Good Governor,
Order his Liberty: He yielded up
Himself, his all.

Blan. He yielded on your Word;
And I am made the cautionary Pledge,
The Gage and Hostage of your keeping it.

Stan. Remember, Sir, he yielded on your Word;
Your Word! which honest Men will think should be
The last Resort of Truth, and Trust on Earth:
What if your Delegate in Pow'r had done
To some dear Friend as you have done to *Blandford*?
Wou'd not Resentment arm'd by Justice strike
For him and for yourself?—You know it wou'd:

[*The Governor seems moved.*
This Argument he feels—enforce it *Blandford*.

[*Aside to Blandford.*

Blan. You cannot coolly sure intend the Wrong,
You cannot sure persist in such an Act,
And be sedately cruel and perfidious—

Stan. Besides, the Wretch has now no longer Pow'r
Of doing Harm, were he dispos'd to use it.

Blan. But he is not dispos'd.

Stan. We'll be his Sureties, Sir,

Blan. Yes, we will answer for him now, my Friend,
the Governor, I know will thank us.

Gov. Well, you will have it so, do what you please,
just what you will with him, I give you Leave. [*Exit.*

Blan.

Blan. We thank you, Sir; this Way, pray come with me. [*Exeunt.*]

The SCENE drawn shews Oroonoko upon his Back, his Legs and Arms stretch'd out, and chain'd to the Ground.

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, &c.

Blan. O miserable Sight! help every one, Assist me all to free him from his Chains.

[They help him up, and bring him forward, looking down.]

Most injur'd Prince! how shall we clear ourselves?

Stan. We are not guilty of your Injuries,
No way consenting to 'em; but abhor,
Abominate, and loath this Cruelty.

Oro. If you would have me think you are not all
Confederates, all accessary to

The base Injustice of your Governor:

If you would have me live, as you appear
Concern'd for me; if you would have me live
To thank, and bless you, there is yet a Way
To tie me ever to your honest Love:

Bring my *Imoinda* to me; give me her,
To charm my Sorrows, and, if possible,
I'll sit down with my Wrongs; never to rise
Against my Fate, or think of Vengeance more.

Blan. Be satisfy'd, you may depend upon us;
We'll bring her safe to you, and suddenly.

In the mean Time

Endeavour to forget, Sir, and forgive;

And hope a better Fortune.

[*Exeunt.*]

Oroonoko alone.

Oro. Forget! forgive! I must indeed forget,
When I forgive: But while I am a Man,
In Flesh, that bears the living Marks of Shame,
The Print of his dishonourable Chains,

E

I never

I never can forgive this Governor,
 This Villain;
 What shall I do? If I declare myself,
 I know him, he will sneak behind his Guard
 Of Followers, and braye me in his Fears.
 Else, Lion-like, with my devouring Rage,
 I would rush on him, fasten on his Throat,
 Tear a wide Passage to his treacherous Heart,
 And that Way lay him open to the World. [*Pausing.*
 If I should turn his Christian Arts on him,
 Promise him, speak him fair, flatter, and creep
 With fawning Steps, to get within his Faith,
 I could betray him then, as he has me.
 But am I sure by that to right myself?
 Lying's a certain Mark of Cowardice:
 And, when the Tongue forgets its Honesty,
 The Heart and Hand may drop their Functions too,
 And nothing worthy be resolv'd or done.
 Honour should be concern'd in Honour's Cause,
 Let me but find out
 An honest Remedy, I have the Hand,
 A ministring Hand, that will apply it home. [*Exit.*

S C E N E, *The Governor's House.*

Enter Governor.

Gov. I would not have her tell me, she consents;
 In Favour of the Sex's Modesty,
 That still should be presum'd; because there is
 A greater Impudence in owning it,
 Than in allowing all that we can do.
 For when a Man has said
 All that is fit, to save the Decency,
 The Women know the rest is to be done.
 I will not disappoint her. [*Going.*

Enter to him Blandford and Stanmore.

Gov. (*impatiently*) Well, what's the Matter now?

Blan.

Blan. I'm sorry we intrude, Sir; but our Bus'ness
Will quickly be dispatch'd: We come to seek.

Clemene, Sir; we've promis'd Oroonoko

To bring her to him.

Gov. You do very well; 'tis kindly done of you:
Ev'n carry her to him with all my Heart.

Stan. You must tell us where she is.

Gov. I tell you! why, don't you know?

Blan. Your Servant says she's in the House.

Gov. No, no, I brought her home at first, indeed;
but I thought it would not look well to keep her here;
I remov'd her in the Hurry, only to take care of her.
What! she belongs to you: I have nothing to do
with her.

Stan. But where is she now, Sir?

Gov. Why, Faith, I can't say certainly: You'll hear
of her at *Parbam* House, I suppose: There, or there-
abouts; I think I sent her there.

Blan. I'll have an Eye on him. *[Aside.*

[Exeunt all but the Governor.

Gov. I have ly'd myself into a little Time,
And must employ it: They'll be here again;
But I must be before 'em.

[Going out, he meets Imoinda, and seizes her.

Are you come?

I'll court no longer for a Happiness

That is in my own keeping: You may still

Refuse to grant, so I have Power to take.

The Man that asks deserves to be deny'd.

*[She disengages one Hand, and draws his Sword
from his Side upon him; Governor starts and
retires; Blandford enters behind him.*

Imo. He does indeed, that asks unworthily.

Blan. You hear her, Sir; that asks unworthily.

Gov. You are no judge.

Blan. I am of my own Slave.

Gov. Be gone, and leave us.

Blan. When you let her go.

Gov. To fasten upon you.

Blan. I must defend myself.

Imo. Help, Murder, help.

[*Imoinda retreats towards the Door, favour'd by Blandford; when they are clos'd, she throws down the Sword, and runs out. Governor takes up his Sword, they fight, close, and fall, Blandford upon him. Servants enter, and part 'em.*

Gov. She shall not 'scape me so. I've gone too far,
Not to go farther. Curse on my Delay:
But yet she is, and shall be in my Power.

Blan. Nay, then it is the War of Honesty;
I know you, and will save you from yourself.

Gov. All come along with me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE the last.

Enter Oroonoko.

Oro. To Honour bound! and yet a Slave to Love!
I am distracted by their rival Powers,
And both will be obey'd. O great Revenge!
Thou Raiser and Restorer of fal'n Fame!
Let me not be unworthy of thy Aid,
For stopping in thy Course: I still am thine;
But can't forget I am *Imoinda's* too.
She calls me from my Wrongs to rescue her.
No Man condemn me, who has never felt
A Woman's Power, or try'd the Force of Love:
Love, Love will be
My first Ambition, and my Fame the next.

Enter Aboan, bloody.

My Eyes are turn'd against me, and combine
With my sworn Enemies, to represent
This Spectacle of Horror. *Aboan!*
My ever faithful Friend!

Abo. I have no Name
That can distinguish me from the vile Earth,

To which I'm going : A poor abject Worm,
That crawl'd a while upon the bustling World,
And now am trampled to my Dust again.

Oro. I see thee gash'd and mangled.

Abo. Spare my Shame, *[He lies down,*
To tell how they have us'd me : But believe
The Hangman's Hand would have been merciful.
Do not you scorn me, Sir, to think I can
Intend to live under this Infamy.
I do not come for Pity, but for Pardon.

Oro. For Pardon! wound me not with keener Anguish
Than yet I feel, by thinking thou can'st need it :
Thou'st spent an honourable Life with me ;
The earliest Servant of my rising Fame.

[Stooping and embracing him.

Abo. And would attend it with my latest Care :
My Life was yours, and so shall be my Death.
You must not live ; alas ! you must not live——
Bending and sinking, I have dragg'd my Steps
Thus far, to tell you that you cannot live :
To warn you of those ignominious Wrongs,
Whips, Rods, and all the Instruments of Death,
Which I have felt, and are prepar'd for you.
This was the Duty that I had to pay.
'Tis done, and now I beg to be discharg'd.

Oro. What shall I do for thee ?

Abo. My Body tires,
And will not bear me off to Liberty :
I shall again be taken, made a Slave.
A Sword, a Dagger yet would rescue me.
I have not Strength to go to find out Death,
You must direct him to me.

Oro. Here he is, *[Gives him a Dagger,*
The only Present I can make thee now :
And, next the honourable Means of Life,
I would bestow the honest Means of Death.

Abo. I cannot stay to thank you : Only this,
The Villain *Hotman*, as I stagger'd hither,
Arm'd with a Sword I met : I wrench'd it from him,

Collecting all my Strength; and in his Heart,
Stain'd to the Hilt, I left it.

O my dear honour'd Master, if there is
A Being after this, I shall be yours
In the next World; your faithful Slave again.
This is to try. (*Stabs himself*) I had a living Sense
Of all your royal Favours; but this last,
Strikes through my Heart. I will not say, farewell;
For you must follow me. [*Dies.*]

Oro. In Life and Death,
The Guardian of my Honour! Follow thee!
I should have gone before thee: Then perhaps
Thy Fate had been prevented.
Why, why, you Gods! why am I so accurst,
That it must be a Reason of your Wrath;
A Guilt, a Crime sufficient to the Fate
Of any one, but to belong to me?
My Friend has found it, and my Wife will soon:
My Wife! the very Fear's too much for Life:
I can't support it. Where? *Imoinda!* Oh!

[*Going out, she meets him, running into his Arms.*]

Thou Bosom Softness! Down of all my Cares!
Thou art disorder'd, pale, and out of Breath!
If Fate pursues thee, find a Shelter here.
What is it thou would'st tell me?

Imo. 'Tis in vain to call him Villain.

Oro. Call him Governor: Is it not so?

Imo. There's not another sure so great.

Oro. Villain's the common Name of Mankind here,
But his most properly. What! what of him?
I fear to be resolv'd, and must enquire.
He had thee in his Power.

Imo. I blush to think it.

Oro. Blush! to think what?

Imo. That I was in his Power.

Oro. He cou'd not use it?

Imo. What can't such Men do?

Oro. But did he, durst he?

Imo. What he cou'd, he dar'd.

Oro.

Oro. His own Gods damn him then! For ours have none,

No Punishment for such unheard of Crime,

Imo. This Monster, cunning in his Flatteries,
When he had weary'd all his useleſs Arts,
Leap'd out, fierce as a Beaſt of Prey, to ſeize me.
I trembled, fear'd.

Oro. I fear, and tremble now.

What cou'd preſerve thee? What deliver thee?

Imo. That worthy Man, you uſ'd to call your Friend.

Oro. *Blandford.*

Imo. Came in, and ſav'd me from his Rage.

Oro. He was a Friend indeed, to reſcue thee!

And, for his Sake, I'll think it poſſible

A Chriſtian may be yet an honeſt Man.

Imo. O did you know what I have ſtruggled thro',
To ſave me yours, ſure you would promiſe me
Never to ſee me forc'd from you again.

Oro. To promiſe thee! O! do I need to promiſe?
But there is now no farther Uſe of Words.

Death is Security for all our Fears.

[*Shows Aboan's Body on the Floor.*]

Imo. *Aboan!*

Oro. Mangled and torn, reſolv'd to give me Time
To fit myſelf for what I muſt expect,
Groan'd out a Warning to me, and expir'd.

Imo. For what you muſt expect?

Oro. Would that were all!

Imo. What! to be butcher'd thus——

Oro. Juſt as thou ſeeſt.

Imo. By barb'rous Hands, to fall at laſt their Prey!

Oro. I have run the Race with Honour, ſhall I now
Lag, and be overtaken at the Goal?

Imo. No.

Oro. I muſt look back to thee.

[*Tenderly.*]

Imo. You ſhall not need.

I'm always preſent to your Purpoſe, ſay,
Which Way would you diſpoſe me?

Oro. Have a Care.

Thou'rt

Thou'rt on a Precipice, and dost not see.
Whither that Question leads thee.

I cannot, as I would, dispose of thee ;
And, as I ought, I dare not. Oh *Imoinda*!

Imo. Alas! that Sigh! Why do you tremble so?
Nay, then 'tis bad indeed, if you can weep.

Oro. My Heart runs over, if my gushing Eyes
Betray a Weakness which they never knew,
Believe, thou only, thou could'st cause these Tears :
The Gods themselves conspire with faithless Men
To our Destruction.

Imo. Heav'n and Earth our Foes !
If Heav'n could be appeas'd, these cruel Men
Are not to be entreated or believ'd ;
O! think on that, and be no more deceiv'd.

Oro. What can we do?

Imo. Can I do any thing?

Oro. But we were born to suffer.

Imo. Suffer both,
Both die, and so prevent 'em.

Oro. By thy Death!

O! let me hunt my travell'd Thoughts again ;
Range the wide Waste of desolate Despair ;
Start any Hope. Alas! I lose myself,
'Tis pathless, dark, and barren all to me.
Thou art my only Guide, my Light of Life,
And thou art leaving me : Send out thy Beams
Upon the Wing ; let 'em fly all around,
Discover every Way : Is there a Dawn,
A Glimmering of Comfort? The great God,
That rises on the World, must shine on us.

Ima. And see us set before him.

Oro. Thou bespeak'st,
And goest before me.

Imo. So I would in Love,
In the dear unsuspected Part of Life,
In Death for Love. Alas! what Hopes for me?
I was preserv'd but to acquit myself,
To beg to die with you.

Oro. And can'st thou ask it?
I never durst enquire into myself
About thy Fate, and thou resolv'd it all:

Imo. Alas! my Lord! my Fate's resolv'd in yours!

Oro. O! keep thee there: Let not thy Virtue shrink
From my Support, and I will gather Strength,
Fast as I can, to tell thee——

Imo. I must die:

I know 'tis fit, and I can die with you,

Oro. O! thou hast banish'd hence a thousand Fears,
Which sicken'd at my Heart, and quite unmann'd me.

Imo. Your Fear's for me, I know you fear'd my
Strength,

And could not overcome your Tendernefs,
To pass this Sentence on me: And indeed
There you were kind, as I have always found you.

Oro. O! that we cou'd incorporate, be one,
[Embracing her.

One Body, as we have been long one Mind;
That, blended so, we might together mix,
And, losing thus our Being to the World,
Be only found to one another's Joys.

Imo. Is this the Way to part?

Oro. Which is the Way?

Imo. The God of Love is blind, and cannot find it.
But quick, make Haste, our Enemies have Eyes,
To find us out, and shew us the worst Way
Of parting: Think on them.

Oro. Why dost thou wake me?

Imo. O! no more of Love.

For, if I listen to you, I shall quite
Forget my Dangers, and desire to live.
I can't live yours.

[Takes up the Dagger.

Oro. There all the Stings of Death
Are shot into my Heart—what shall I do?

Imo. This Dagger will instruct you.

[Gives it him.

Oro. Ha! this Dagger!

Like Fate, appoints me to the horrid Deed.

Imo. Strike, strike it home, and bravely save us both.

There is no other Safety.

Oro. It must be——

But first a dying Kiss——

[*Kisses her.*

This last Embrace——

[*Embracing her.*

And now——

Imo. I'm ready.

Oro. O! where shall I strike?

Is there the smallest Grain of that lov'd Body

That is not dearer to me than my Eyes,

My bosom'd Heart, and all the Life Blood there?

Bid me cut off these Limbs, hew off these Hands,

Dig out these Eyes, tho' I would keep them last

To gaze upon thee: But to murder thee!

The Joy, and Charm of every ravish'd Sense,

My Wife! forbid it, Nature.

Imo. 'Tis your Wife,

Who on her Knees conjures you. O! in Time

Prevent those Mischiefs that are falling on us.

You may be hurry'd to a shameful Death,

And I too dragg'd to the vile Governor;

Then I may cry aloud: When you are gone,

Where shall I find a Friend again to save me?

Oro. It will be so. Thou unexampled Virtue!

Thy Resolution has recover'd mine:

And now prepare thee.

Imo. Thus, with open Arms,

I welcome you, and Death.

[*He drops his Dagger as he looks on her, and throws himself on the Ground.*

Oro. I cannot bear it.

O let me dash against the Rock of Fate,

Dig up this Earth, tear, tear her Bowels out.

To make a Grave, deep as the Center down,

To swallow wide, and bury us together.

It will not be. O! then some pitying God

(If there be one a Friend to Innocence)

Find

Find yet a way to lay her Beauties down
Gently in Death, and save me from her Blood.

Imo. O rise; 'tis more than Death to see you thus:
I'll ease your Love, and do the Deed myself——

[She takes up the Dagger; he rises in Haste, to take it from her.]

Oro. O! hold, I charge thee, hold.

Imo. Tho' I must own

It would be nobler for us both from you.

Oro. O! for a Whirlwind's Wing to hurry us
To yonder Cliff; which frowns upon the Flood:
That in Embraces lock'd we might plunge in,
And perish thus in one another's Arms.

Imo. Alas! what Shout is that?

Oro. I see 'em coming.

They shall not overtake us. This last Kiss,
And now farewell.

Imo. Farewel; farewell for ever.

Oro. I'll turn my Face away, and do it so:
Now, are you ready?

Imo. Now. But do not grudge me
The Pleasure in my Death of a last Look;
Pray look upon me——Now I'm satisfied.

Oro. So Fate must be by this.

[Going to stab her, he stops short; she lays her Hand on his, in order to give the Blow.]

Imo. Nay, then I must assist you.

Thus, thus 'tis finish'd, and I bless my Fate,

[Stabs herself.]

That, where I liv'd, I die in these lov'd Arms. *[Dies.]*

Oro. She's gone. And now all's at an End with me,
Soft, lay her down; O we will part no more.

[Then throws himself by her.]

But let me pay the Tribute of my Grief,

A few sad Tears to thy lov'd Memory,

And then I follow——

[Weeps over her.]

But I stay too long.

[A Noise again.]

The Noise comes nearer. Hold, before I go.

There's something would be done. It shall be so,
And then, *Imoinda*, I'll come all to thee. [Rises.]

Blandford and his Party, enter before the Governor and his Party; Swords drawn on both Sides.

Gov. You strive in vain to save him; he shall die.

Blan. Not while we can defend him with our Lives.

Gov. Where is he?

Oro. Here's the Wretch whom you would have.
Put up your Swords, and let not civil Broils
Engage you in the cursed Cause of one
Who cannot live, and now intreats to die.

This Object will convince you.

Blan. 'Tis his Wife! [They gather about the Body.]
Alas! there was no other Remedy.

Gov. Who did the bloody Deed?

Oro. The Deed was mine: I know it is, and I expect
Your Laws should tell me so. Thus, self-condemned,
I do resign myself into your Hands,
The Hands of Justice——But I hold the Sword
For you——and for myself.

[Stabs the Governor and himself, then throws himself by Imoinda's Body.]

Stan. He has kill'd the Governor, and stabb'd himself.

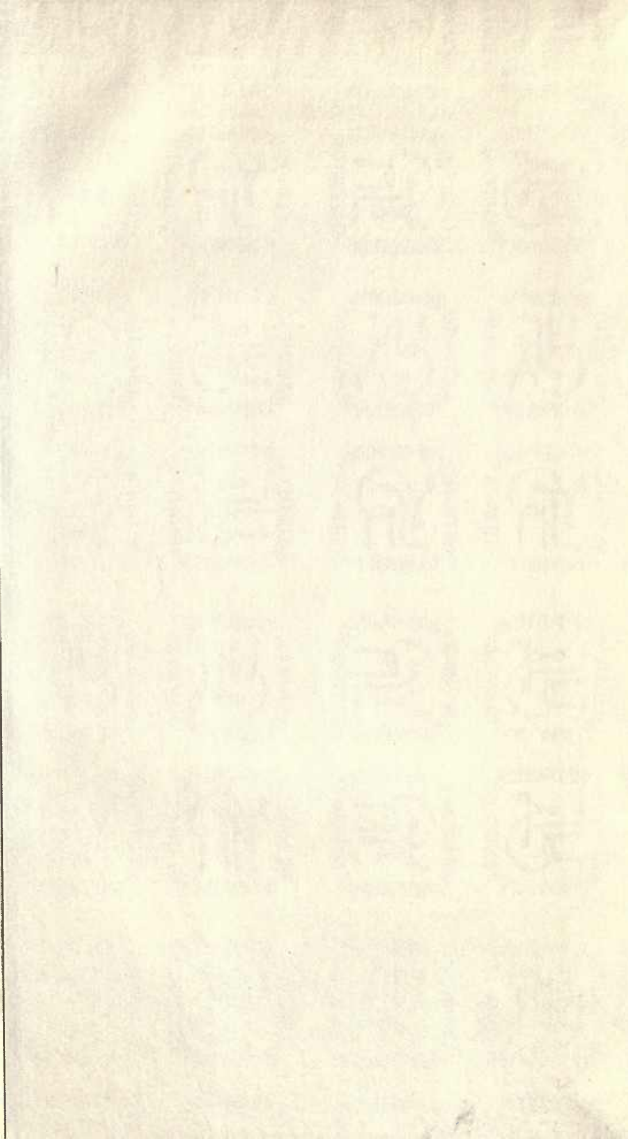
Oro. 'Tis as it should be now; I have sent his Ghost
To be a Witness of that Happiness
In the next World, which he deny'd us here. [Dies.]

Blan. I hope there is a Place of Happiness
In the next World for such exalted Virtue.
Pagan or Unbeliever, yet he liv'd
To all he knew: And, if he went astray,
There's Mercy still above to set him right.
But Christians, guided by the Heav'nly Ray,
Have no Excuse if they mistake their Way.

[Exeunt Omnes.]

F I N I S.

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